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THE
HISTORY
OF THE
ANGLO-SAXONS.

BY
SHARON TURNER, F.A.S.

SECOND EDITION, CORRECTED AND ENLARGED.

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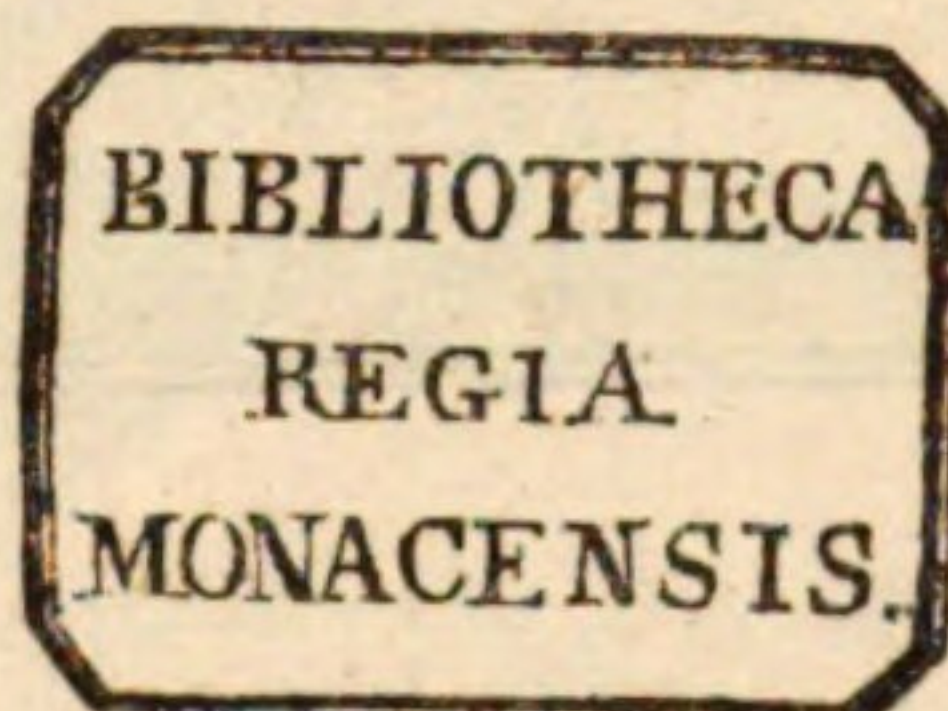
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C O N T E N T S

OF THE

SECOND VOLUME.

BOOK VII.

The Manners of the SAXONS in their Pagan State.

CHAP. I.

The Character and Persons of the more ancient Saxons - - - p. 1

CHAP. II.

The Government and Laws of the more ancient Saxons - - - p. 7

CHAP. III.

The Religion of the Saxons in their Pagan State - - - p. 12

CHAP. IV.

On the Menology and Literature of the Pagan Saxons - - - p. 24

BOOK VIII.

On the Manners of the ANGLO-SAXONS after their Occupation of England.

CHAP. I.

On their Infancy, Childhood, and Names - - - p. 31

CHAP. II.

Their Education - - - p. 39

	CHAP. III.	
Their Food	- - - - -	p. 44
	CHAP. IV.	
Their Drinks and Cookery	- - - - -	p. 51
	CHAP. V.	
Their Dress	- - - - -	p. 57
	CHAP. VI.	
Their Houses, Furniture, and Luxuries	- - - - -	p. 65
	CHAP. VII.	
Their Conviviality and Amusements	- - - - -	p. 73
	CHAP. VIII.	
Their Marriages	- - - - -	p. 82
	CHAP. IX.	
Classes and Condition of Society	- - - - -	p. 90
	CHAP. X.	
Their Gilds or Clubs	- - - - -	p. 103
	CHAP. XI.	
Their Trades, Mechanical Arts, and Foreign Commerce	- - - - -	p. 107
	CHAP. XII.	
Their Money	- - - - -	p. 126
	CHAP. XIII.	
Their Chivalry	- - - - -	p. 139
	CHAP. XIV.	
Their Superstitions	- - - - -	p. 149
	CHAP. XV.	
Their Funerals	- - - - -	p. 154

CONTENTS OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

v

BOOK IX.

Their LANDED Property.

CHAP. I.	
Their Husbandry	p. 159
CHAP. II.	
Their Proprietorship in Land and Tenures	p. 168
CHAP. III.	
The Burdens to which Lands were liable, and their Privileges	p. 175
CHAP. IV.	
Their Conveyances	p. 182
CHAP. V.	
Some Particulars of the Names of Places in Middlesex and London in the Saxon Times	p. 188
CHAP. VI.	
Lawsuits about Land	p. 192
CHAP. VII.	
Their Denominations of Land	p. 196

BOOK X.

The Government of the ANGLO-SAXONS.

CHAP. I.	
The King's Election and Coronation	p. 199
CHAP. II.	
His Family and Officers	p. 209
CHAP. III.	
The Dignity and Prerogatives of the Anglo-Saxon Cyning	p. 211
CHAP. IV.	
The Witena-Gemot	p. 220
CHAP. V.	
Their Official Dignities	p. 232

BOOK XI.

The History of the LAWS of the Anglo-Saxons.

CHAP. I.

Homicide - - - - - p. 239

CHAP. II.

Personal Injuries - - - - - p. 248

CHAP. III.

Theft - - - - - p. 251

CHAP. IV.

Adultery - - - - - p. 253

CHAP. V.

The Were and The Mund - - - - - p. 256

CHAP. VI.

Their Borh, or Sureties - - - - - p. 258

CHAP. VII.

Their Legal Tribunals - - - - - p. 261

CHAP. VIII.

Their Ordeals and legal Punishments - - - - - p. 266

CHAP. IX.

The Trial by Jury - - - - - p. 270

BOOK XII.

Their POETRY, LITERATURE, ARTS, and SCIENCES.

CHAP. I.

Their Native or Vernacular Poetry - - - - - p. 277

CHAP. II.

On the Anglo-Saxon Versification - - - - - p. 326

CHAP. III.

Their Latin Poetry - - - - - p. 332

CONTENTS OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

vii

CHAP. IV.

Of the other Literature of the Anglo-Saxons - - - p. 359

CHAP. V.

The Arts and Sciences of the Anglo-Saxons - - - p. 406

CHAP. VI.

Their Sciences - - - p. 419

BOOK XIII.

Their RELIGION.

CHAP. I.

The History of the Propagation of Christianity among the Anglo-Saxons p. 431

BOOK XIV.

Their LANGUAGE.

CHAP. I.

On the Structure or Mechanism of the Anglo-Saxon Language - p. 447

CHAP. II.

On the Originality of the Anglo-Saxon Language - - - p. 461

CHAP. III.

On the Copiousness of the Saxon Language - - - p. 464

CHAP. IV.	Of the other Literature of the Anglo-Saxons	p. 329
CHAP. V.	The Arts and Sciences of the Anglo-Saxons	p. 406
CHAP. VI.	Their Sciences	p. 419

BOOK XIII.

Their Religion.

CHAP. I.	The History of the Propagation of Christianity among the Anglo-Saxons	p. 481
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BOOK XIV.

Their Language.

CHAP. I.	On the Structure or Mechanism of the Anglo-Saxon Language	p. 447
CHAP. II.	On the Origin of the Anglo-Saxon Language	p. 461
CHAP. III.	On the Composition of the Saxon Language	p. 464

HISTORY OF THE
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H I S T O R Y
OF THE
A N G L O - S A X O N S.

B O O K VII.

The Manners of the Saxons in their Pagan State.

C H A P. I.

The Character and Persons of the most ancient Saxons.

THE Anglo-Saxons came to England from the Germanic continent; and above a century had elapsed from their first settlements before they received those improvements and changes which followed the introduction of the Christian system. These circumstances will make it advisable to exhibit them as they were in their continental and pagan state, before they are delineated with the features, and in the dress of Christianity.

It would be extremely desirable to give a complete portrait of our ancestors in their uncivilized state, because this is an epocha in the history of the human mind which has seldom been faithfully detailed or sufficiently considered. But our curiosity must submit to disappointment on this subject. The converted Anglo-Saxon remembered the practices of his idolatrous ancestors with too much abhorrence, to record them for the notice of future ages; and as we have no Runic spells

C H A P.
I.

to call the pagan warrior from his grave, we can only see him in those imperfect sketches which patient industry may collect from the passages that are scattered in the works which time has spared.

The character of the ancient Saxons displayed the qualities of fearless, active, and successful pirates. It is not merely the Spanish churchman¹ Orosius, who remarks them as dreadful for their courage and agility, but the emperor Julian, who had lived among barbarians, and who had fought with some Saxon tribes, denotes them as distinguished amongst their neighbours for vehemence and valour.² Zosimus, their contemporary, expresses the general feeling of his age when he ranks them as superior to others in energy, strength, and warlike fortitude.³

Their ferocious⁴ qualities were nourished by the habit of indiscriminate depredation. It was from the cruelty and destructiveness, as well as from the suddenness of their incursions, that they were dreaded more than any other people. Like the Danes and Norwegians, their successors and assailants, they desolated where they plundered with the sword and flame.⁵

It was consistency in such men to be inattentive to danger. They launched their predatory vessels, and suffered the wind to blow them to any foreign coast, indifferent whether the result was a depredation unresisted, or the deathful conflict. Such was their cupidity, or their brutal hardihood, that they often preferred embarking in the tempest which might shipwreck them, because at such a season their victims would be more unguarded. Their warfare did not originate from the more generous, or the more pardonable of man's evil passions. It was the offspring of the basest. Their swords were not

¹ Orosius, lib. vii. c. 32.

² Julian Imp. Orat. de laud. Const. p. 116.

³ Zosimus, lib. iii. p. 147. ed. Ox.

⁴ Salvian says, *gens Saxonum fera est*, de Gub. Dei, lib. iv. V. Fortunatus calls them "aspera gens, vivens quasi more ferino,"

⁵ Mag. Bib. 787; and Sidonius has the strong expression of "*omni hosti truculentior*," lib. viii. c. 7. Even in the eighth century the Saxons on the continent are described by Eginhard as "*natura feroces*," p. 4.

⁶ Amm. Marcell. lib. xxviii. c. 3.

unsheathed by ambition or revenge. The love of plunder and of cruelty was their favourite habit; and hence they attacked, indifferently, every coast which they could reach.⁶

Inland provinces were not protected from their invasion. From ignorance, necessity, or policy, they traversed the ocean in boats, framed of osiers, and covered with skins sewed together; and such was their skill, or their prodigality of life, that in these they sported in the tempests of the German Ocean.⁷

It is possible that men who had seen the vessels in which the Franks had escaped from the Pontus, and who had been twice instructed by Imperial usurpers in the naval art, might have constructed more important war ships, if their judgment had approved. Although their isles, and their maritime provinces of Ditmarsia and Stormaria, were barren of wood, yet Holsatia abounded with it; and if their defective land-carriage prevented the frequency of this supply, the Elbe was at hand to float down inexhaustible stores from the immense forests of Germany.

They may have preferred their light skiffs,⁸ from an experience of their superior utility. When their fatal incursions had incited the Romans to fortify and to garrison the frontier of Britain and Gaul, the Saxons directed their enmity against the inland regions. For their peculiar vessels no coast was too shallow, no river too small; they dared to ascend the streams for eighty or an hundred miles, and if other plunder invited, or danger pressed, they carried their vessels from one river to another, and thus escaped with facility from the most superior foe.⁹

⁶ Amm. Marcell. lib. xxviii. c. 3. xxvii. c. 8. Sid. Apoll.

⁷ That this ocean was anciently dangerous from its tempests, Boniface, the self-devoted missionary of Germany, often states: periculosum est navigantibus, p. 52. Germanici tempestatibus maris undique quassantibus fatigati senis miserere, p. 59. vol. xvi. Bib. Mag. Patrum.

⁸ On the vessels of the Saxons, see Du Bos, Hist. Crit. de la Mon. de France, 1. p. 150.—Mioparo quasi minimus paro; idem et carabus. Est parva scapha ex vimine facta quæ contexta crudo corio genus navigii præbet. Isidorus Orig. l. 19. c. 1.

⁹ See Du Bos, 149. 2 Gibbon, 524.

Of the Saxons, an author of the fifth century says to a friend who was opposed to them, "You see as many piratical leaders as you behold rowers, for they all command, obey, teach, and learn the art of pillage. Hence, after your greatest caution, still greater care is requisite. This enemy is fiercer than any other; if you be unguarded, they attack; if prepared, they elude you. They despise the opposing, and destroy the unwary; if they pursue, they overtake; if they fly, they escape. Shipwrecks discipline them, not deter; they do not merely know, they are familiar to all the dangers of the sea; a tempest gives them security and success, for it divests the meditated land of the apprehension of a descent. In the midst of waves and threatening rocks they rejoice at their peril, because they hope to surprize."¹⁰

As their naval expeditions, though often wildly daring, were much governed by the policy of surprize, so their land incursions were sometimes conducted with all the craft of robbers. "Dispersed into many bodies," says Zosimus, of one of their confederates, "they plundered by night, and when day appeared, they concealed themselves in the woods, feasting on the booty they had gained."¹¹ They are, however, seldom mentioned by the historians of the fourth and fifth centuries without some epithets which express a superiority over other men in their achievements or their courage.

The ferocity of the Saxon character would seem to suit better the dark and melancholy physiognomies of Asia and Africa, than the fair, pleasing, and blue-eyed countenances by which our ancestors are described.¹² But though nature had supplied them with the germs of those amiable qualities which have become the national character of their descendants, their

¹⁰ Sid. Apoll. Epist. 6. l. 8.

Franc, who organized some corps on the same plan.

¹¹ Zosimus, lib. iii. p. 149. This tribe, whom he calls Quadi, Marcellinus, lib. xvii. c. 8, more correctly names Chamavi. These robbers were destroyed by one Chariette, a

¹² Sidon. Apoll. lib. viii. ep. 9. Bede, lib. ii. c. 1. The expressions applied by Tacitus to all the German nations are, "truces, et cerulei oculi."

direful customs, their acquired passions, and barbarous education, perverted every good propensity. So ductile is the human capacity, that there is no colour, climate, or constitution, which governs the moral character so permanently as the good or evil habits and discipline to which it is subjected. An incident mentioned by Symmachus shews that they had a pride of mind which could not endure despair. He says that twenty-nine Saxons strangled themselves, to avoid being brought into a theatre for a gladiatorial show.¹³

Their persons were of the largest size. On the continent they were so proud of their forms and their descent, and so anxious to perpetuate them, that they were averse to marriages with other nations.¹⁴ Hence the colour of the hair of their males is mentioned as uniform. In the fourth century they had a peculiar method of arranging and cutting their hair, which Sidonius has described. It had the effect of enlarging the appearance of the face, and diminishing the head.¹⁵ In the following ages it is mentioned as diffused upon their shoulders;¹⁶ and an ancient Saxon law punished the man who seized another by the hair.¹⁷

In their dress, their loose linen vests were adorned with trimming, woven in different colours.¹⁸ Their external garment was the sagum, or cloak,¹⁹ and they had shoes. Their females had gowns, and several ornaments for the arms, hands, and neck.²⁰

¹³ Ep. 46. l. 2. p. 90.

¹⁴ Meginh. ib. ap. Langb. Script. Dan. t. 2. p. 39. Wittichind, p. 5. Tacitus had expressed the same of all the German tribes.

¹⁵ Cujus vertex extimas per oras
Non contenta suos tenere morsus
Arctat lamina marginem comarum
Et sic crinibus ad cutem recisis
Decrescit caput, additurque vultus.

Sid. Ap.

¹⁶ Wittichind, p. 5.

¹⁷ 1 Linden. Codex Legum, p. 474.

¹⁸ Paul. Warnefrid de Gest. Langob. lib. iv. c. 23. p. 838. Grot. ed. The vest is mentioned in the old Saxon law, p. 474, and their idol, Crodus, had one.—Fabric. Hist. Sax. tom. 1. p. 61.

¹⁹ Wittichind, p. 5; and see Lindenbrog Glossary, Voc. Sagum, and Weiss. The curious may see a description of the dress of a Franc in the Monk of St. Gall's life of Charlemagne, and of a Longobard in P. Warnefridus, lib. iv. c. 23.

²⁰ One is called in the old Anglian law the Rhedo, to the stealing of which the same penalty was attached as to stealing six sows with pig. The mother, in the same law, might at her death leave to her son, land, slaves, and money; to her daughter, the ornaments of the neck; id est, murænas (necklaces), nuscas, monilia (collars), inares (ear-rings), vestes, armillas (bracelets) vel quidquid ornamenti proprii videbatur habuisse. 1 Lindenb. p. 484.

The Saxons who invaded Thuringia in the sixth century, are described by Wittichind as leaning on small shields, with long lances, and with great knives, or crooked swords, by their sides.²¹ Fabricius, an author of the sixteenth century, saw in an ancient picture of a Saxon, a sword bent into a semilunar shape.²² He adds, that their shields were suspended by chains, that their horsemen used iron sledge hammers,²³ and that their armour was heavy. I have not met with the documents from which he took these circumstances.

²¹ Wittichind, 5. As Tacitus remarks that the Germans seldom had swords, and more generally javelins, there is some plausibility in the derivation of the Saxon name from their sachs, or peculiar swords. The Cimbri on the contrary had great and long

swords, according to Plutarch, in his life of Marius.

²² Fabric. i. p. 66.

²³ The favourite weapon of Thor, according to the Northern Eddas, was a mallet.

CHAP. II.

The Government and Laws of the more ancient Saxons.

IT is said by Aristotle, that whoever lives voluntarily out of civil society must have a vicious disposition, or be an existence superior to man.¹ But nature has endeavoured to preserve her noblest offspring from this dismal and flagitious independence. She has given us faculties which can be only used, and wants which can be only provided for in society. She has made the social union inseparable from our safety, our virtue, our pride, and our felicity.

CHAP.
II.

Government and laws must have been coeval with society, for they are essentially necessary to its continuance. A spacious edifice might as well be expected to last without cement or foundation, as a society to subsist without some regulations of individual will, and some acknowledged authority to enforce their observance.

The Athenian philosopher has correctly traced the progress of our species towards political institutions. The connubial union is one of the most imperious and most acceptable laws of our frame. From this arose families and relationships. Families enlarged into villages and towns, and an aggregation of these gave being to a state.²

A family is naturally governed by its parents, and its ramifications by the aged. The father, says Homer, is the legislator to his wife and children.³ Among most barbarous tribes, the aged ancestors have prescribed to the community the rules of mutual behaviour, and have adjudged disputes. As popula-

¹ Aristotle's Politic. lib. i. c. 2. p. 380. ed. 1606.

² Aristot. lib. i. c. 3. p. 381. This is one

of Aristotle's most valuable works, and will repay with great profit a careful attention.

³ Cited by Aristot. ib. p. 379.

tion multiplied, as civilization advanced, and the sphere of human activity has been enlarged, more precise regulations, more decided subordination, and more complicated governments became necessary, and have been established.

That the Saxon societies, in their early stages, were governed by the aged, is very strikingly shewn in the fact, that the words of their language which denote authority, also express age. When it states that Joseph was appointed ruler over Egypt, the words are, "sette into *ealdre* over Egypta land."⁴ For Cæsar, the emperor, we have "Caseras tha beoth cyninga "yldest."⁵ Here eldest is used as synonymous to greatest. A British general is called an "ealdorman."⁶ The Latin term satrapa, by which Bede expressed the ruling Saxon chief of a district on the continent, is rendered by his royal translator "ealdorman."⁷ The phrase of "a certain ruler," in St. Luke, is, in the Saxon gospel, "sum ealdor."⁸ The contest between the disciples of Christ which should be the greatest, is expressed in the Saxon, which should be the yldest.⁹ The aged were the primitive chiefs and governors among the Saxons, and therefore the terms expressing age were used to denote dignity so habitually that they were retained in common phrase even after the custom of connecting power with seniority had become obsolete.

The most ancient account of the Saxon government on the continent exists in this short but expressive passage of Bede: "The ancient Saxons have no king, but many chiefs set over their people, who, when war presses, draw lots equally; and whomsoever the chance points out, they all follow as leader,

⁴ Genesis, xlv. v. 8, in Thwaite's Saxon Heptateuch.

⁵ So the pontifex is called yldesta bisceop. Orosius, lib. v. c. 4.

⁶ Sax. Chron.

⁷ Smith's edition of Bede, p. 624.

⁸ Luke xviii. v. 18. So the highest seats in the synagogue are called tha yldestan setl, Luke xx. 46. The Saxons had yldest wyrhta

for the chief workman, yldest wicing for the chief of pirates, on scype yldost for a pilot, yeldest on tham yfelan flocce for prince of that evil flock. So Bede's "he who by the "priority of seat seemed to be their chief," lib. v. c. 13, is rendered by Alfred se wes setles yldest et me thuhthe tha he heora ealdor beon sceolde, p. 633.

⁹ Luke xxii. v. 24.

“ and obey during the war. The war concluded, all the chiefs
“ become again of equal power.”¹⁰

CHAP.
II.

That the continental Saxons in the eighth and preceding centuries were under an aristocracy of chieftains, and had no kings but in war; and that the war-kings who were then chosen laid aside their power when peace was re-established, is attested by other ancient authorities.¹¹ More recent historians have repeated the assertion.¹² Cæsar gives an account nearly similar, of the German magistracy in his time.¹³ We may, therefore, safely infer, that when the Anglo-Saxons visited England, they came under war-kings. The reigns of Hengist, and the founders of the dynasties of the Octarchy, were so many periods of continued warfare, and their immediate posterity were assailed with hostility from the natives almost perpetual. The Anglo-Saxons were under a necessity of continuing their war-kings, until at length a permanent, though a limited monarchy, was established. Their chiefs, or witena, continued in their influence and power. They elected the king, though they chose him from the family of the deceased sovereign; and their consent in their gemot continued to be necessary to the more important acts of his authority. But these points will be more fully illustrated in a subsequent division of this work.

There were four orders of men among the ancient Saxons: the Etheling or noble, the free man, the freed man, and the

¹⁰ Bede Hist. Eccles. lib. v. c. 10. p. 192.

¹¹ The ancient Saxon poet says,
Quæ nec rege fuit saltem sociata sub uno
Ut se militiæ pariter defenderet usu:
Sed variis divisa modis plebs omnis habebat,
Quot pagos, tot pene duces. Du Chesne.

Si autem universale bellum ingrueret,
sorte eligitur cui omnes obedire oporteat ad
administrandum imminens bellum. Quo
peracto æquo jure ac lege propria contentus
potestate unusquisque vivebat.—Wittichind,
lib. i. p. 7. So the Vetus Theotisce Chron-
icon on the year 810. Twelff Edelinges der
Sassen de reden over dat lant tho Sassen.
Und Wannere dat se krich in dat lant tho
Sassen hadden so koren se von den twelffen

einen, de was ore Koning de wile de krich
warde. Und wan de krich bericht wart, so
weren de twelffe gelick, so was des einen
koniges state uth, und was den anderon
gelick.—Lindenb. Gloss. 1347.

¹² Krantz Metropol. lib. i. c. 1, and Belli
Dithmar. p. 431. Fabricius Hist. Sax. i.
p. 69. Sagittarius Hist. Bard. 60.

¹³ Quum bellum civitas aut illatum de-
fendit aut infert, magistratus qui eo bello
præsint, ut vitæ necisque habeant potestatem
deliguntur. In pace nullus est communis
magistratus, sed principes regionum atque
pagorum inter suos jus dicunt controversi-
asque minuunt.—De Bell. Gall. lib. vi. c. 21.

servile. The nobles were jealous of their race and rank. Nobles married nobles only, and the severest penalties prohibited intrusions of one rank into the others.¹⁴

Of their laws, in their Pagan state, very little can be detailed from authority sufficiently ancient. From the uniformity of their principles of legislation in continental Saxony and in England, in a subsequent age, we may infer, that pecuniary compensation was their general mode of redressing personal injuries, and of punishing criminal offences. This feature certainly announces that the spirit of legislation began to be understood, and that the sword of punishment had been wrested, by the government, out of the hand of the vindictive individual. It also displays a state of society in which property was accumulating. It is, however, a form of punishment which is adapted to the first epochs of civilization only; because as wealth is more generally possessed, pecuniary mulcts become legal impunity.

Their severity against adultery was personal and sanguinary. If a woman became unchaste, she was compelled to hang herself, her body was burnt, and over her ashes the adulterer was executed. Or else a company of females whipped her from district to district, and, dividing her garments to the girdle, they pierced her body with their knives. They drove her, thus bleeding, from their habitations; and wheresoever she went, new collections of women renewed the cruel punishment, till she expired.¹⁵ This dreadful custom shews that the savage character of the nation was not confined to the males. Female chastity is indeed a virtue as indispensable as it is attractive; but its proper guardians are the maternal example and tuition, the constitutional delicacy of the female mind, its native love of honour, and the uncorrupted voice and feeling of society. If it can be only maintained by the horrors

¹⁴ Meginhard, 2 Lang. p. 40. Nithardus, lib. iv. Huchald Vita B. Lebuini, Act. Sanct. vol. vi. p. 282, and Wittichind.

¹⁵ Boniface describes this custom in his letter to Ethelbald, the king of Mercia, in Mag. Bibl. Patrum, tom. xvi. p. 55.

of a Saxon punishment, the nation is too barbarous, or too contaminated, to be benefited, by the penalty.

CHAP.
II.

In their marriages they allowed a son to wed his father's widow, and a brother his sister-in-law.¹⁶

By one of the laws of their confederates, the Frisians, who were among the tribes that settled in England, we learn that their religious establishment was protected by penalties as terrible as those which guarded their chastity. "Whoever
" breaks into a temple, and takes away any of the sacred
" things, let him be led to the sea, and in the sand which the
" tide usually covers, let his ears be cut off, let him be
" castrated, and immolated to the gods, whose temples he
" has violated."¹⁷

¹⁶ Sax Chron. Bede i. c. 27. p. 64.

¹⁷ Lex Fris. ep. 1. Lindenb. p. 508.

C H A P. III.

*The Religion of the Saxons in their Pagan State.*BOOK
VII.

AT this happy period of the world, we cannot reflect on the idolatry of ancient times without astonishment at the infatuation which has so inveterately, in various regions, clouded the human mind. We feel, indeed, that it is impossible to contemplate the grand canopy of the universe; to descry the planets, moving in governed order; to find comets darting from system to system in an orbit of which a space almost incalculable is the diameter; to discover constellations beyond constellations in endless multiplicity, and to have indications of the light of others whose full beam of splendor has not yet reached us; we feel it impossible to meditate on these innumerable theatres of existence, without feeling with awe, that this amazing magnificence of nature announces an Author tremendously great. But it is very difficult to conceive how the lessons of the skies should have taught that localizing idolatry, which their transcendant grandeur, and almost infinite extent, seem expressly calculated to destroy.

The most ancient religions of the world appear to have been pure theism, with neither idols nor temples. These essential agents in the political mechanism of idolatry were unknown to the ancient Pelasgians, from whom the Grecians chiefly sprung, and to the early Egyptians and Romans. The Jewish patriarchs had them not, and even our German ancestors, according to Tacitus, were without them.

In every nation but the Jewish, a more gross system of superstition was gradually established. The Deity was dethroned by the symbols which human folly selected as his representatives; the most ancient of these were the heavenly

bodies, the most pardonable objects of erring adoration. But when it was found possible to make superstition a profitable craft, then departed heroes and kings were exalted into gods. Delirious fancy soon added others so profusely, that the air, the sea, the rivers, the woods, and the earth, became so stocked with divinities, that it was easier, as an ancient sage remarked, to find a deity than a man.

When the Anglo-Saxons came into Britain, they had also abandoned the nobler customs of their ancestors for the degrading practice of idolatry. Their peculiar system is too imperfectly known to us for its stages to be discriminated, or its progress detailed. It appears to have been of a very mixed nature, and to have been so long in existence as to have attained a regular establishment and much ceremonial pomp.

That when they settled in Britain they had idols, altars, temples, and priests; that their temples were surrounded with inclosures; that they were profaned if lances were thrown into them; and that it was not lawful for a priest to bear arms, or to ride but on a mare; we learn from the unquestionable authority of our venerable Bede.¹

Some of the subjects of their adoration we find in their names for the days of the week.

Sunday,	or Sunnan dæg,	is the Sun's day.
Monday,	or Monan dæg,	is the Moon's day.
Tuesday,	or Tiwes dæg,	is Tiw's day.
Wednesday,	or Wodnes dæg,	is Woden's day.
Thursday,	or Thunres dæg,	is Thunre's day.
Friday,	or Frige dæg,	is Friga's day.
Saturday,	or Seternes dæg,	is Seterne's day. ²

¹ Bede, lib. ii. c. 13 et 9; lib. iii. c. 8; lib. ii. c. 6. Pope Gregory mentions, that if their pagan temples were well built, they might be used for christian churches, lib. i. c. 30. Their name for idol was wig, and for altar wigbed, the table or bed of the idol. The word wig also signifies war, and this

may imply either that the idol was a warrior, or the god of war.

² I take the Saxon names of the days of the week from the Cotton MS. Tiberius A. 3. They may be also found in the Saxon gospels, p. 24 S. 72 M. 55 T. 48 W. 49 Th. 28 F. 52 S.

Of the sun and moon we can only state, that their sun was a female deity, and their moon was of the male sex;³ of their Tiw, we know nothing but his name. Woden was the great ancestor from whom they deduced their genealogies. It has been already remarked, that the calculations from the Saxon pedigrees place Woden in the third century.⁴ Of the Saxon Woden, his wife Friga, and of Thunr, we know very little, and it would not be very profitable to detail all the reveries which have been published about them. The Odin, Frigg, and Thor of the Northmen were obviously the same characters; but we are not authorized to ascribe to the Saxon deities the apparatus and mythology which the Northern scalds of subsequent ages have transmitted to us from Denmark, Iceland, and Norway. Woden was the predominant idol of the Saxon adoration, but we can state no more of him, unless we describe the Odin of the Danes and Norwegians. Yet, as every people has its peculiar superstitions, it would be incorrect to apply to the more ancient Woden of the Saxons the religious costume and creed attached to the Danish Odin. It will be better to confess our ignorance of the Saxon superstition wherever it exists, and to reserve for a separate occasion the idolatry of the later Northmen.⁵

³ The same peculiarity of genders obtained in the ancient Northern language. Edda Semundi, p. 14. It is curious, that in the passage of an Arabian poet, cited by Pocock, in not. ad Carmen Tograi, p. 13, we meet with a female sun and masculine moon. The distich is,

Nec nomen femininum soli dedecus,

Nec masculinum lunæ gloria.

See Marshall's Observ. in Vers. Ev. p. 513. Cæsar mentions, that the Germans worshipped the sun and moon, lib. vi. c. 19. In the Saxon treatise on the vernal equinox we have their peculiar genders of these bodies displayed. "When the sun goeth at evening under this earth, then is the earth's breadth between us and the sun; so that we have not *her* light till *she* rises up at the other end." Of the moon it says,

"always *he* turns *his* ridge to the sun."

"The moon hath no light but of the sun,

"and *he* is of all stars the lowest."—

Cotton MS. Tib. A. iii. p. 63.

⁴ 1 Anglo-Saxons, p. 202. Perhaps Hleothor, the Saxon for oracle, may have some reference to Thor. Hleo means a shady place, or an asylum. Hleothor is literally the retirement of Thor. Hleothor cwyde means the saying of an oracle. Hleothorstede the place of an oracle.

⁵ Without imitating those who have lately fancied that there never was an Odin, and that he is merely a mythological personage, the name of a deity, we may remark, that the date of Odin's appearance in the North cannot be accurately ascertained. This difficulty has arisen partly from the confusion in which, from their want of chrono-

The names of two of the Anglo-Saxon goddesses have been transmitted to us by Bede. He mentions RHEDA, to whom they sacrificed in March, which, from her rites, received the appellation of Rehd-monath; and EOSTRE, whose festivities were celebrated in April, which thence obtained the name of Eostre-monath.⁶ Her name is still retained to express the season of our great pascal solemnity: and thus the memory of one of the idols of our ancestors will be perpetuated as long as our language and country continue. Their name for a goddess was gydena; and as the word is applied as a proper name instead of Vesta,⁷ it is not unlikely that they had a peculiar divinity so called.

The idol adored in Heligland, one of the islands originally occupied by the Saxons, was FOSETE, who was so celebrated that the place became known by his name; it was called Fosetesland. Temples were there built to him, and the country was deemed so sacred, that none dared to touch any animal which fed on it, nor to draw water from a fountain which flowed there, unless in awful silence. In the eighth

logy, all the incidents of the North, anterior to the eighth century, are involved, and partly from the wild and discordant fictions of the scalds, who have clouded the history of Odin by their fantastic mythology. The same obscurity attends the heroes of all countries who have been deified after death, and upon whose memory the poets have taken the trouble to scatter the weeds as well as the flowers of their fancy. The human existence of Odin appears to me to be satisfactorily proved by two facts: 1st, The founders of the Anglo-Saxon octarchy deduced their descent from Odin by genealogies in which the ancestors are distinctly mentioned up to him. These genealogies have the appearance of greater authenticity by not being the servile copies of each other; they exhibit to us different individuals in the successive stages of the ancestry of each, and they claim different children of Odin as the founders of the lines. These genealogies are also purely Anglo-Saxon. 2d, The other

circumstance is, that the Northern chroniclers and scalds derive their heroes also from Odin by his different children. Snorre, in his Ynglinga Saga, gives a detailed history of Sweden regularly from him; and though the Northerners cannot be suspected of having borrowed their genealogies from the Anglo-Saxons, yet they agree in some of the children ascribed to Odin. This coincidence between the genealogies preserved in their new country of men who left the North in the fifth and sixth centuries, and the genealogies of the most celebrated heroes who acted in the North during the subsequent ages, could not have arisen if there never had been an Odin who left such children. I have already expressed my opinion, that the Anglo-Saxon genealogies lead us to the most probable date of Odin's arrival in the North.

⁶ Bede, De Temporum Ratione, in his works, vol. ii. p. 81.

⁷ See Saxon Dictionary, voc. Gydena.

century, Willebrord, a converted Anglo-Saxon, born in Northumbria, who, under the auspices of his uncle Boniface, went missionary to Friesland, endeavoured to destroy the superstition, though Radbod, the fierce king of the island, devoted to a cruel death all who violated it. Willebrord, fearless of the consequences, baptized three men in the fountain, invoking the Trinity, and caused some cattle who were feeding there to be killed for the food of his companions. The surrounding pagans expected them to have been struck dead or insane.⁸

That the Angles had a goddess whom they called Hertha, or mother Earth, we learn from Tacitus. He says, that in an island in the ocean there was a grove, within which was a vehicle covered with a garment, which it was permitted to the priest alone to touch. The goddess was presumed to be within it, and was carried, by cows, with great veneration. Joy, festivity, and hospitality were then universal. Wars and weapons were forgotten, and peace and quiet reigned, then only known, then only loved, until the priest returned the goddess to her temple, satiated with mortal converse. The vehicle, the garment, and the goddess herself, were washed in a secret lake. Slaves ministered, whom the waters ingulphed.⁹

The Saxons dreaded an evil being, whom they named Faul;¹⁰ some kind of female power they called an elf, who is very frequently used as a complimentary simile to their ladies. Thus Judith is said to be elf scinu, shining as an elf.¹¹ They also venerated stones, groves, and fountains.¹² The continental Saxons respected the lady Hera, a fancied being, who was believed to fly about in the air in the week after their Jule, or between our Christmas and Epiphany. Abundance was

⁸ Alcuini vita S. Willebrord in his works, p. 1438, or in Sanct. Hist. Col. v. vi. p. 130, Charles Martel conquered Radbod, and added the island to his dominions, ib. St. Liudger, who died in 809, destroyed the temples of Fosete. See his life by Alfridus, who was alive in 848, in Act. Sanct. Bolland. March. tom. iii. p. 646.

⁹ Tacit. de mor. German.

¹⁰ That Faul might not hurt, was part of one of their exorcisms. See Sax. Dict. voce Faul.

¹¹ So Judith, p. 21.

¹² See Meginhard. Conrad Usperg. Wilkins, 83. Linden. Gloss. 1473.

thought to follow her visit.¹³ We may add that Hilde, one of their terms for battle, seems to allude to a war goddess of that name.

CHAP.
III.

That the Saxons had many idols, appears from several authors. Gregory, in the eighth century, addressing the old Saxons, exhorts them to abandon their idols, whether of gold, silver, brass, stone, or any other kind.¹⁴ But we cannot give an authentic description of their figures. Hama, Flinnus, Siba, and Zernebogus, or the black, malevolent, ill-omened deity, occupied part of their superstitions, but we cannot be answerable for more than their names.¹⁵ A Saxon Venus has been also mentioned: she is exhibited as standing naked in a car, with myrtle round her head, a lighted torch in her breast, and the figure of the world in her right hand. But the description is suspicious, and the authority questionable.¹⁶

The account of Crodus has stronger marks of authenticity; it seems to have been preserved in the Brunswick Chronicle, from which more recent historians have taken their descriptions. The figure of Crodus was a reaper, clothed in a white tunic, with a linen girdle; his right hand held a vessel, full of roses and other flowers, swimming in water; his left hand supported the wheel of a car; his naked feet stood on a rough scaly fish like a perch.¹⁷

¹³ Gobelin ap. Meibom. Irminsula. p. 12. We may add that Bede, in his commentary on Luke, mentions demons appearing to men as females, and to women as men, whom, he says, the Gauls call Dusii, the presumed origin of our word deuce. Hincmar, in 16 Bib. Mag. 561. But he does not say that these demons were part of the Saxon paganism. There were two personages feared in the North, whom we may mention here, as words from their names have become familiar to ourselves; one was Ochus Bochus, a magician and demon, the other was Neccus, a malign deity who frequented the waters. If any perished in whirlpools, or by cramp, or bad swimming, he was thought to be seized by Neccus. Steel was supposed to expel him, and there-

fore all who bathed threw some little pieces of steel in the water for that purpose. Verel. Suio Goth. p. 13. It is probable that we here see the origin of hocus pocus, and Old Nick.

¹⁴ 16 Bib. Mag. 101.

¹⁵ Fabricius Hist. Sax. p. 62. Verstigan describes the idol Flynt as the image of death in a sheet, holding a torch, and placed on a great flint-stone. He also mentions the names of Helmsteed, Prono, Fidegast, and Sieve. He gives the figures of others, but as he has referred to no authorities, I think his descriptions ought not to be used.

¹⁶ Gyraldus says he read of this idol in the Saxon histories. Worm. Mon. p. 19.

¹⁷ Albinus Nov. Sax. Hist. p. 70, and Fabricius, p. 61. What Fabricius calls the

That the Saxons had the dismal custom of human sacrifices on some occasions, cannot be doubted. Tacitus mentions it as a feature of all the Germans, that on certain days they offered human victims to their chief deity.¹⁸ Sidonius attests, that on their return from a depredation the Saxons immolated one tenth of their captives, selected by lot.¹⁹ We have already mentioned, that for sacrilege the offender was sacrificed to the god whose temple he had violated;²⁰ and Ennodius mentions of the Saxons, Heruli, and Franks, that they were believed to appease their deities with human blood.²¹ But whether human sacrifices were an established part of their superstitious ritual, or whether they were but an occasional immolation of captives or criminals, cannot be decided. The latter is most probable.²²

Of the Anglo-Saxon idolatry we cannot learn many particulars. In the month of February they offered cakes to their deities, which occasioned the month to be called Sol monath. September, from its religious ceremonies, was denominated Halig monath, the holy month. November was marked, as the month of sacrifices, Blot monath, because at this period they devoted to their gods the cattle that they slew.²³ As it was their custom to use during the winter salted or dried meat, perhaps November, or Blot monath, was the period when the winter provision was prepared and consecrated.

gentes annales on this subject, Albinus refers to as the Brunswicense Chronicon. Verstigan, from Joannes Pomarius, mentions Seater as another name of this idol, from whom he derives Saturday.

¹⁸ De moribus Germ.

¹⁹ Sid. Apoll. ep. vi. l. 8. Herodotus says of the Scythians, the presumed ancestors of the Saxons, that they sacrificed to Mars every hundredth man of their prisoners. Melp.

²⁰ See before, p. 11.

²¹ Ennodius in Mag. Bib. Pol. 15. p. 306.

²² Of the human sacrifices of the Northmen we have more express testimony. Dithmar apud Steph. 92, says, that in Seland, in January, they slew ninety-nine men, and as

many horses, dogs, and cocks, to appease their deities. Snorre mentions a king of Sweden who immolated nine of his sons to Odin, to obtain an extension of life, i. p. 34. He also states that the Swedes sacrificed one of their sovereigns to Odin, to obtain plenty, ib. p. 56. When the famine began, oxen were offered up; in the following autumn, they proceeded to human victims, and at last destroyed their king. Dudo Quint. says, they slew cattle and men in honour of Thor. For other instances of human sacrifices in the North, see Herv. Saga, 97; Ara Frode, 63. 145; Kristni Saga, 93.

²³ Bede, De Temporum Ratione, p. 81. See a good description of a Danish sacrifice in Snorre, Saga Hak. God. c. 16.

Their celebrated festival of Geol, or Jule, which occurred at the period of our Christmas, was a combination of religion and conviviality. December was called *erra Geola*, or before the Geol. January was *estera Geola*, or after it. As one of the Saxon names for Christmas day was *Geola*, or *Geohol deg*, it is likely that this was the time when the festival commenced. This day was the first of their year; and as Bede derives it from the turning of the sun, and the days beginning then to lengthen;²⁴ as it was also called mother night, and their sun was worshipped as a female, I suspect that this was a festival dedicated to the sun.

But the Saxon idol, whose celebrity on the continent was the most eminent, was the *IRMINSULA*.²⁵

The name of this venerated idol has been spelt with varying orthography. The Saxon Chronicle, published at Mentz in 1492, calls it *Armensula*, which accords with the pronunciation of modern Saxony. The appellation adhered to by Meibomius, the most elaborate investigator of this curious object of Saxon idolatry, is *Irminsula*.²⁶

It stood at Eresberg, on the *Dimele*.²⁷ This place the Saxon Chronicle above mentioned calls *Marsburg*. The Rhyning Chronicle of the thirteenth century writes it *Mersberg*, which is the modern name.²⁸

Its temple was spacious, elaborate, and magnificent. The image was raised upon a marble column.²⁹

The predominant figure was an armed warrior. Its right hand held a banner, in which a red rose was conspicuous; its left presented a balance. The crest of its helmet was a cock;

²⁴ Bede, *De Temporum Ratione*. I see that *gyl sunne* once occurs in a hymn "Let the sun shine." See *Dict. voc. Gyl*. They who desire to see the opinions which have been given of the derivation of the *Geol* will be assisted by Hickes, *Dissert. Ep.* p. 212, &c.

²⁵ The most complete account of this idol is in the *Irminsula Saxonica*, by Henry Meibomius. It is in the third volume of

his *Rerum German. Hist.* published by the two Meibomii.

²⁶ Meibom. p. 6. It has been called *Irminsulus*, *Irminsul*, *Irmindsul*, *Erminsul*, *Hermansaul*, *Hormensul*, *Hermesuel*, *Hermensul*, and *Adurmensul*, *ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.* c. ii. p. 6.

²⁸ *Ibid.* p. 7.

²⁹ *Ibid.* c. iii. p. 8.

on its breast was engraven a bear, and the shield depending from its shoulders exhibited a lion in a field full of flowers.³⁰ The expressions of Adam of Bremen seem to intimate that it was of wood, and that the place where it stood had no roof. It was the largest idol of all Saxony, and, according to Rolwinck, a writer of the fifteenth century, whose authorities are not known to us, though the warlike image was the principal figure, three others were about it.³¹ From the chronicle called the Vernacular Chronicle, we learn that the other Saxon temples had pictures of the Irminsula.³²

Priests of both sexes attend the temple. The women applied themselves to divination and fortune-telling; the men sacrificed, and often intermeddled with political affairs, as their sanction was thought to insure success.

The priests of the Irminsula at Eresberg appointed the gow graven, the governors of the districts of continental Saxony. They also named the judges, who annually decided the provincial disputes. There were sixteen of these judges: the eldest, and therefore the chief, was called Gravius; the youngest, Frono, or attendant; the rest were Freyerichter, or free judges. They had jurisdiction over seventy-two families. Twice a year, in April and October, the Gravius and the Frono went to Eresberg, and there made a placatory offering of two wax lights and nine pieces of money. If any of the judges died in the year, the event was notified to the priests, who out of the seventy-two families chose a substitute. In the open air, before the door of the person appointed, his election was seven times announced to the people in a loud voice, and this was his inauguration.

In the hour of battle, the priests took their favourite image from its column, and carried it to the field. After the conflict, captives, and the cowardly of their own army, were immolated

³⁰ Meibom. p. 9. The particular descriptions of this idol are all taken from the Saxon Chronicle, printed at Mentz.

³¹ Meib. 9.

³² Ibid. 9.

to the idol.³³ Meibomius states two stanzas of an ancient song, in which the son of a Saxon king, who had lost a battle, complains that he was delivered to the priest to be sacrificed.³⁴ He adds, that, according to some writers, the ancient Saxons, and chiefly their military, on certain solemn days, clothed in armour, and brandishing iron cestus, rode round the idol, and, sometimes dismounting to kneel before it, bowed down and murmured out their prayers for help and victory.³⁵

To whom this great image was erected, is a question full of uncertainty. Because *Eppus* approached the sound of *Irmisul*, and *Apus* that of *Eresberg*, it has been referred to Mars and Mercury.³⁶ Some considered it a memorial of the celebrated Arminius;³⁷ and one has laboured to prove that it was an hieroglyphical effigy, intended for no deity in particular.³⁸

In 772 this venerated object of Saxon superstition was thrown down and broken, and its fane destroyed by Charlemagne. For three days the work of demolition was carried on by one part of the army, while the other remained under arms. Its immense wealth and precious vessels were distributed to the conquerors, or devoted to pious uses.³⁹

The fate of the column of the image after its eversion may be noticed.⁴⁰ It was thrown into a waggon, and buried on

³³ Meib. 10.

³⁴ The verses are,

Sol ich nun in Gottes fronen hende
In meinen aller besten tagen
Geben werden, und sterben so elende
Das musz ich wol hochlich klagen.

Wen mir das glucke fuget hette
Des streites einen guten ende,
Dorffte ich nicht leisten diese wette
Netzen mit blut die hire wende.

Meib. 10.

³⁵ Meib. 11.

³⁶ Ibid. c. v. p. 11.

³⁷ The names to this supposition are very respectable.

³⁸ Joannes Goropius Beccanius is the person whose reveries are given at length in Meibomius, 13—17. Hermansul literally expresses,

"The Pillar of the Lord the Moon, or the Lord Man," whom the Germans, according to Tacitus, revered. But there is no dependance to be placed on etymological derivations; we must therefore be content to leave the subject in all the obscurity with which time has covered it.

³⁹ Meib. p. 18. The image is said to have been long preserved in the monastery at Corbey. It then bore this inscription: "Formerly I was the leader and god of the Saxons. The people of war adored me. The nation who worshipped me governed the field of battle." Ibid.

⁴⁰ It was about eleven feet long, and the circumference of the base was about twelve cubits. The base was of rude stone, or of gravel-stone. The column was marble, of a light red colour. Its belts were of orichal-

the Weser, in a place where Corbey afterwards stood. It was found again in the reign after Charlemagne, and was transported beyond the Weser. The Saxons attempting to rescue it, a battle ensued on the spot, which was afterwards called Armensula, from the incident. The Saxons were repulsed, and, to prevent further chances, the image was hastily thrown into the Inner. A church being afterwards built in the vicinity, at Hillesheim, it was conveyed into it after much religious lustration, and placed in the choir, where it long served to hold their lights at their festivals.⁴¹ For many ages it remained neglected and forgotten, till at length Meibomius saw it, and a canon of the church, friendly to his studies, had its rust and discoloration taken off.⁴²

Idolatrous nations are eminently superstitious. The proneness of mankind to search into futurity attempts its gratification, in the æras of ignorance, by the fallacious use of auguries, lots, and omens.

All the German nations were addicted to these absurdities, and the account which Tacitus relates of them generally is applied by Meginhard to the ancient Saxons. They were infatuated to believe that the voices and flights of birds were interpreters of the divine will. Horses were supposed to neigh from celestial inspiration, and they decided their public deliberations by the wisdom of lots. They cut a small branch of a fruit-tree into twigs, marked them, and scattered them at random on a white vest. The priest, if it were a public council, or the father, at a private consultation, prayed, gazed at heaven, drew each three times, and interpreted according to the mark previously impressed. If the omen were adverse, the council was deferred.⁴³

chus; the upper and lower gilt, and also the one between these and the crown, which is also gilt, as is the upper circle incumbent on it, which has three heroic verses. The whole work was surrounded with iron rails,

dentated to preserve it from injury. Meib. 31. He has given a plate of it.

⁴¹ Meib. 19 and 31.

⁴² Ibid. 19.

⁴³ Tacit. de morib. Germ. and Meginhard, p. 39; and see Bede, p. 144, 147. In the

To explore the fate of an impending battle, they selected a captive of the nation opposing, and appointed a chosen Saxon to fight with him. They judged of their future victory or defeat by the issue of this duel.⁴⁴

The notion which from Chaldea pervaded both East and West, that the celestial luminaries influenced the fortunes of mankind, operated powerfully on the Saxon mind. Affairs were thought to be undertaken with better chance on peculiar days, and the full or new moon was the indication of the auspicious season.⁴⁵

Magic, the favourite delusion of ignorant man, the invention of his malignity, or the resort of his imbecility, prevailed among the Anglo-Saxons. Even one of their kings chose to meet the Christian missionaries in the air, because he fancied that magical arts had peculiar power within a house.⁴⁶ But we will reserve a full account of the superstitions of our ancestors for a subsequent chapter.

law of the Frisians there is a curious order of determining by lot, with twigs, who was guilty of a homicide, when it occurred in a popular tumult. See it in Lindenb. i. p. 496. Alfred, in his version of Bede, says, they

hluton mid tanum, they cast lots with twigs, p. 624.

⁴⁴ Meginhard, ib.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Bede, i. c. 25, p. 61.

C H A P. IV.

*On the Menology and Literature of the Pagan Saxons.*BOOK
VII.

IN their computation of time, our ancestors reckoned by nights instead of days, and by winters instead of years. Their months were governed by the revolution of the moon. They began their year from the day which we celebrate as Christmas-day, and that night they called Moedrenech, or mother night, from the worship or ceremonies in which it was spent. In the common years they appropriated three lunar months to each of the four seasons. When their year of thirteen months occurred, they added the superfluous month to their summer season, and by that circumstance had then three months of the name of Lida, which occasioned these years of thirteen months to be called Tri-Lidi. The names of their months were these:

Giuli, or æftera Geola,	answering to our	January.
Sol monath	- - - - -	February.
Rehd monath	- - - - -	March.
Eostur monath	- - - - -	April.
Tri-milchi	- - - - -	May.
Lida	- - - - -	June.
Lida	- - - - -	July.
Weird, or Wenden monath	- - - - -	August.
Halg monath	- - - - -	September.
Wyntyr fylleth	- - - - -	October.
Bloth monath	- - - - -	November.
Giuli, or ærra Geola	- - - - -	December.

They divided the year into two principal parts, summer and winter. The six months of the longer days were applied to

the summer portion, the remainder to winter. Their winter season began at their month Wyntyr fylleth, or October. The full moon in this month was the era or the commencement of this season, and the words Wyntyr fylleth were meant to express the winter full moon.

The reason of the names of their months of Sol monath, Rehd monath, Eostur monath, Halig monath, and Bloth monath, we have already explained. Bede thus accounts for the others:

Tri-milchi expressed that their cattle were then milked three times a day. Lida signifies mild or navigable, because in these months the serenity of the air is peculiarly favourable to navigation. Wenden monath implies that the month was usually tempestuous. The months of Geola were so called because of the turning of the sun on this day, and the diminution of the length of the night.

It has been much doubted whether the Anglo-Saxons had the use of letters when they possessed themselves of England. It is certain that no specimen of any Saxon writing, anterior to their conversion to Christianity, can be produced. It cannot therefore be proved that they had letters by any direct evidence, and yet some reasons may be stated which make it not altogether safe to assert too positively that our ancestors were ignorant of the art of writing in their pagan state.

1st. Alphabetical characters were used by the Northern nations on the Baltic before they received Christianity;² and the origin of these is ascribed to Odin, who heads the genealogies of the ancient Saxon chieftains, as well as those of Sweden, Norway, and Denmark; and who is stated to have

¹ This valuable account of the Saxon year is in Bede, *De Temporum Ratione*, in the second volume of his works, in the edition of Cologne, p. 81. Other Saxon menologies may be seen in Wanley, 185 and 109; and a comparative one of the Anglo-Saxons, Franks, Icelanders, Danes, and Swedes, is in Hickeys's *Gram. Anglo-Sax.* p. 214.

² I would not attribute to the Runic letters an extravagant antiquity, but the inscriptions on rocks, &c. copied by Wormius in his *Literaturæ Runicæ*, and by Stephanus, in his notes on Saxo, prove that the Northerners used them before they received Christianity.

settled in Saxony before he advanced to the North.³ Either the pagan Saxons were acquainted with the Runic characters, or they were introduced in the North after the fifth century, when the Saxons came to Britain, and before the middle of the sixth, when they are mentioned by Fortunatus, which is contrary to the history and traditions of the Scandinavian nations, and to probability. We may remark, that Run is used in Anglo-Saxon,⁴ as Runar in the Icelandic, to express letters or characters.⁵ It is true that Odin used the runæ for the purpose of magic, and that in Saxon run-cræftig, or skilled in runæ, signifies a magician;⁶ but the magical application of characters is no argument against their alphabetical nature, because many of the foolish charms which our ancestors and other nations have respected, have consisted, not merely of alphabetical characters, but even of words.⁷

2d. The passage of Venantius Fortunatus, written in the middle of the sixth century, attests that the Runic was used for the purpose of writing in his time. He says,

The barbarous Runæ is painted on ashen tablets,
And what the papyrus says a smooth rod effects.⁸

Now, as the Anglo-Saxons were not inferior in civilization to any of the barbarous nations of the North, it cannot be easily supposed that they were ignorant of Runic characters,⁹ if their neighbours used them.

³ Snorre, Ynglinga Saga.

⁴ So Cedmon uses the word, run bith gerecenod, p. 73; hwæt seo run bude, p. 86; that he to him the letters should read and explain, hwæt seo run bude, p. 90; he had before said, in his account of Daniel and Belshazzar, that the angel of the Lord wrat tha in wage worda gerynu baswe bocstafas, p. 90.

⁵ Schilter's Thesaurus, vol. iii. p. 693.

⁶ Thus Cedmon says, the run-cræftige men could not read the hand-writing till Daniel came, p. 90.

⁷ One passage in a Saxon MS. confirms this idea: "Then asked the ealdorman the heft-ling, whether through drycreft, or through

"rynstafes, he had broken his bonds; and he answered that he knew nothing of this craft." Vesp. D. 14. p. 132. Now rynstafes means literally ryn letters. We may remark, that the Welsh word for alphabet is coel bren, which literally means the tree or wood of Omen; and see the Saxon description of the northern Runæ, in Hickes's Gram. Ang. Sax. p. 135.

⁸ Ven. Fortun. lib. vi. p. 814. Ed. Mag. Bib. tom. viii.

⁹ There are various alphabets of the Runæ, but their differences are not very great. I consider those characters to be most interesting which have been taken from the ancient inscriptions remaining in the

3d. Though it cannot be doubted that the letters of our Saxon MSS. written after their conversion, are of Roman origin, except only two, the th and the w, þ, p, the thorn and the wen, yet these two characters are allowed by the best critics to be of Runic parentage;¹⁰ and if this be true, it would shew that the Anglo-Saxons were acquainted with Runic as well as with Roman characters when they commenced the hand-writing that prevails in their MSS.

4th. If the Saxons had derived the use of letters from the Roman ecclesiastics, it is probable that they would have taken from the Latin language the words they would use to express them. Other nations, so indebted, have done this. To instance from the Erse language:

For book, they have leabhar, from liber.

letter, litir,¹¹ litera.

to write, scriobham, scribere.

grafam, γραφω.

writing, sgriobhadh, scriptura.

to read, leagham, } legere.
leabham, }

But nations who had known letters before they became acquainted with Roman literature would have indigenous terms to express them.

The Saxons have such terms. The most common word by which the Anglo-Saxons denoted alphabetical letters, was stæf; plural, stæfa. Elfric, in his Saxon Grammar, so uses it.¹² The copy of the Saxon coronation oath begins with, "This writing is written, stæf be stæfe (letter by letter), from that

North. Wormius gives these, Lit. Run. p. 58. Hickes, in his Gram. Anglo-Isl. c. 1. gives several Runic alphabets.

¹⁰ The Saxons used three characters for th, Ð, 8, and þ. Of these the two first seem to be Roman capitals, with a small hyphen. Astle, in his History of Writing, p. 7 and 8, gives these d's. The other, þ, is the Runic d. See Wormius, p. 58. The

Runic d, in some dialects, was pronounced th: so dus, a giant, or spectre of the woods, as given by Wormius, p. 94, is by other writers written, thus. I consider the p to be taken from the þ.

¹¹ In the Erse Testament, Greek letters are expressed by litrichibh Greigis. Luke xxiii. v. 38.

¹² Cotton. Lib. Julius, A. 2.

“writing which Dunstan, archbishop, gave to our lord at “Kingston.”¹³ In the same sense the word is used in Alfred’s translation of Bede,¹⁴ and in the Saxon gospels.” It is curious to find the same word so applied in the Runic mythology. In the Vafthrudis-mal, one of the odes of the ancient Edda of Semund, it occurs in the speech of Odin, who says “fornum stavfom” in the ancient letters.¹⁶

The numerous compound words derived from stæf, a letter, shew it to have been a radical term in the language, and of general application.

Stæf-creft,	the art of letters.
Stæfen-row,	the alphabet.
Stæf-gefeg,	a syllable.
Stæflic,	learned.
Stæfnian,	to teach letters.
Stæf plega,	a game at letters.
Stæf-wise,	wise in letters.
Stæfes-heafod,	the head of the letters.
Stafa-nama,	the names of the letters.

The same word was also used like the Latin *litera*, to signify an epistle.¹⁷

The art of using letters, or writing, is also expressed in Saxon by a verb not of Roman origin. The Saxon term for the verb to write is not, like the Erse expression, from the Latin, *scribere*, but is “awritan,” or “gewritan.” This verb is formed from a similar noun of the same meaning as stæf. The noun is preserved in the Mæso-Gothic, where *writs* signifies “a letter.”

¹³ Cotton. Lib. Cleop. B. 13.

¹⁴ Bede, 615. 633.

¹⁵ John, vii. v. 15. Luke, xxiii. v. 38.

¹⁶ Edda Semund, p. 3. In the Icelandic Gospels, for Latin and Hebrew letters we have *Latiniskum* and *Ebreskum bokstefum*, Luke xxiii. v. 38. The Franco-theotisc, for letters, has a similar compound word, *bokstaven*.

¹⁷ When a letter or authoritative document is mentioned in Saxon, the expressions

applied to it are not borrowed from the Latin, as *scriptum*, *mandatum*, *epistola*, and such like; but it is said, “Honorius sent the Scot a ge-writ,” Sax. Ch. 39; desired the Pope with his ge-writ to confirm it, ib. 38. So Alfred, translating Bede, says, “the Pope sent to Augustin pallium and ge-writ,” i. c. 29. here borrowing from the Latin the pallium, a thing known to them from the Romans, but using a native Saxon term to express the word epistle.

In like manner the Saxons did not derive their word for book from the Latin *liber*; they expressed it by their own term, " *boc*," as the Northerns called it " *bog*."

I do not mean to assert indiscriminately, that whenever a word indigenous in a language is used to express writing, it is therefore to be inferred, that the people using that language have also letters; because it may so happen that the word may not have been an indigenous term for letters, but for something else; and may have been applied to express letters only analogically or metaphorically. To give an instance: the Indians of New England expressed letters, or writing, by the terms *wussukwhonk*, or *wussukwheg*.¹⁸ But the Indians had no letters nor writing among them; whence then had they these words? The answer is, that they were in the habit of painting their faces and their garments, and when we made them acquainted with writing, they applied to it their word for painting.¹⁹ But though they could figuratively apply their term for painting to express writing, they had nothing to signify a book, and therefore it was necessary to ingraft our English word " *book*" into their language for that purpose.²⁰

On the whole, I am induced to believe that the Anglo-Saxons were not unacquainted with alphabetical characters when they came into England. However this may be, it is certain that if they had ancient letters, they ceased to use them after their conversion, with the exception of their *þ* and *ƿ*. It was the invariable policy of the Roman ecclesiastics to discourage the use of the Runic characters, because they were of pagan

¹⁸ Thus in the Indian Bible, " and this writing was written," Dan. v. 24. is rendered, *kah yeh wussukwheg unussukkuh whosu*; " and this is the writing that was written," *kah yeh wussukwhonk ne adt tannus-sukuh whosik*, ib. v. 25. " Darius signed the writing," *Darius sealham wussuk whosu-onk*, vi. v. 9. " And the writing was" *wussuk whonk no*. John xix. v. 19.

¹⁹ Thus *wussukho*su was a painted coat. Williams' Key to the Language of America, p. 184. ed. 1643, and see his remark, p. 61.

The Malays, who have borrowed their letters from other nations, have used the same analogy. Their word " to write" is *toolis*, which also signifies to paint. See Howison's Malay Dictionary.

²⁰ Hence the translator was obliged to express, " this is the book of the generation" by *uppometuogane book*. Matt. i. v. 1. So, " I have found the book of the law," *nunnamteoh naumatue book*, 2 Kings, xxii. v. 8. " Hilkiab gave the book," *Hilkiab aninnumauau book*. Ibid. v. 9.

origin, and had been much connected with idolatrous superstitions.²¹ Hence, as soon as the Christian clergy acquired influence in the Saxon octarchy, all that appeared in their literature was in the character which they had formed from the Romans.

We know nothing of the compositions of the Anglo-Saxons in their pagan state. Tacitus mentions generally of the Germans, that they had ancient songs,²² and therefore we may believe that the Anglo-Saxons were not without them. Indeed, Dunstan is said to have learned the vain songs of his countrymen in their pagan state; and we may suppose, that if such compositions had not been in existence at that period, Edgar would not have forbidden men, on festivals, to sing Heathen songs.²³ But none of these have survived to us. If they were ever committed to writing, it was on wood, or stones: indeed, their word for book (*boc*) expresses a beech-tree, and seems to allude to the matter of which their earliest books were made.²⁴ The poets of barbarous ages usually confide the little effusions of their genius to the care of tradition. They are seldom preserved in writing till literature becomes a serious study; and therefore we may easily believe, that if the Anglo-Saxons had alphabetical characters, they were much more used for divinations, charms, and funeral inscriptions, than for literary compositions.

²¹ The Swedes were persuaded by the Pope, in 1001, to lay aside the Runic letters, and to adopt the Roman in their stead. They were abolished in Denmark in the beginning of the fourteenth century, and in Iceland soon after. Astle's History of Writing, p. 89.

²² De moribus German.

²³ Wilk. Leg. Anglo-Sax. p. 83.

²⁴ Wormius infers, that pieces of wood cut from the beech-tree were the ancient northern books, Lit. Run. p. 6. Saxo Grammaticus mentions, that Fengo's ambassadors took with them *litteras ligno insculptas*, be-

cause, adds Saxo, that was formerly a celebrated kind of material to write upon, lib. iii. p. 52. Besides the passage formerly cited from Fortunatus, we may notice another, in which he speaks of the bark as used to contain characters. See Worm. p. 9, who says, that no wood more abounds in Denmark than the beech, nor is any more adapted to receive impressions, ib. p. 7. In Welsh, *gwydd*, a tree, or wood, is used to denote a book. Thus Gwilym Tew talks of reading the *gwydd*. Owen's Dict. voc. *Gwydd*.

THE
HISTORY
OF THE
ANGLO-SAXONS.

BOOK VIII.

*Of the Manners of the Anglo-Saxons after their Occupation
of England.*

CHAP. I.

On their Infancy, Childhood, and Names.

SUCH were the people who possessed themselves of the south part of Britain during the fifth and sixth centuries; and it may amuse us now to consider that the human character has seldom displayed qualities more inauspicious to the improvement of intellect or of moral character. They were bands of fierce, ignorant, idolatrous, and superstitious pirates, enthusiastically courageous, but habitually cruel. Yet from such ancestors a nation has, in the course of twelve centuries, been formed, which, inferior to none in every moral and intellectual merit, is superior to every other in the love and possession of useful liberty: a nation which cultivates with equal success the elegancies of art, the ingenious labours of industry, the energies of war, the researches of science, and the richest productions of genius.

CHAP.

I.

This improved state has been slowly attained under the discipline of very diversified events. The first gradation of the happy progress was effected during that period, which it is the object of this work to elucidate.

The Anglo-Saxons must have been materially improved in their manners and mental associations by the internal state of Britain at the time of their invasion.

They came among a people who, for above three centuries, had been the obedient subjects of the Roman government; to whom the peaceful acquisition and enjoyment of regular property had become familiar; who had cultivated the luxuries which create a distaste for war, and love of indolent tranquillity; and whose country abounded with those works of art, that distribution of wealth, and those articles of convenience, which a rude mind cannot contemplate without feeling new wants, and expecting new comforts; without having its curiosity agitated, and its comprehension enlarged. It is true that the feuds which followed the departure of the Romans had disturbed the prosperity of the island, and the struggles with the Saxons must have spread much devastation. But the monuments and the fruits of the preceding civilization, though diminished, were not destroyed. After all the disorders of the period, Gildas still boasts of the island containing twenty-eight cities and some castles, with houses, walls, gates, and towers;¹ and from the ruins of Caerlleon, as they continued even to the twelfth century, when they were seen by Giraldus, we may form some notion of the interior improvements of Britain in the fifth and sixth centuries. He says, "It was elegantly built by the Romans with brick walls. "Many vestiges of its ancient splendour are yet remaining; "stately palaces, which formerly, with their gilded tiles, displayed the Roman grandeur. It was first built by the "Roman nobility, and adorned with sumptuous edifices, an "exceeding high tower, remarkable hot baths, ruins of ancient

¹ Gildas, p. 1.

“ temples and theatres, encompassed with stately walls, partly
“ yet standing. Subterraneous edifices are frequently met
“ with, not only within the walls, which are about three miles
“ in circumference, but also in the suburbs, as aqueducts,
“ vaults, hypocausts, and stoves.”²

We learn from Tacitus, that so early as the first century, the Romans applied themselves to civilize the Britons. The intelligent Agricola endeavoured to draw the natives from their dispersed population to those enjoyments of civilized life which tempt mankind to peace and leisure. For this purpose he exhorted and assisted them to build houses, forums, and temples; he urged the nobles to have the minds of their sons imbued with the liberal arts, and to cultivate their talents by rhetorical studies.³ The Britons submitted to the pleasing yoke of civilization: the Roman costume became fashionable; and the luxuries of their baths, porches, and entertainments, were valued and imitated. These facts will enable us to conceive that the Britons had become so much more advanced in the improvements of arts, knowledge, and luxury, than their fierce invaders, as to have been useful instruments in mitigating their barbarous customs, and accelerating their civilization.

The first great change in the Anglo-Saxons appeared in the discontinuance of their piracies. They ceased to be the ferocious spoilers of the ocean and its coasts; they became land-owners, agriculturists, and industrious citizens; they seized and divided the acquisitions of British influence, and made the commonalty of the island their slaves. Their war-leaders became territorial chiefs; and the conflicts of capricious and sanguinary robbery were exchanged for the possession and inheritance of property in its various sorts; for trades and manufactures; for useful luxuries, peaceful industry, and domestic comfort.

² Girald. Camb. Itin. p. 836. Ed. Camb.
and 1 Henry Hist. Eng. p. 269.

³ Tacit. de vita Agric.

We will proceed to consider them as they displayed their manners and customs during their occupation of England, and before the Norman conquest introduced new institutions.

Their tenderest and most helpless years were under the care of females. The gratitude of Edgar to his nurse appears, from his rewarding with grants of land the noble lady, wife of an ealdorman, who had nursed and educated him with maternal attention.⁴ This was not unusual: Ethelstan, an Anglo-Saxon ætheling, says, in his will, "I give to Alfswythe, my foster-mother, for her great deservingness, the lands at Wertune, that I bought of my father for two hundred and fifty mancusa of gold by weight."⁵

They had infant baptism: hence the Saxon homily says, "though the cild for youth may not speak when men baptize it."⁶ They were enjoined to baptize their children within thirty days after birth.⁷ They baptized by immersion; for when Ethelred was plunged in, the royal infant disgraced himself. They used the cradle.⁸ It is mentioned in the laws, of a person of the dignity of a gesithcund man, that when he travelled he might have with him his gerefas, his smith, and his child's nurse.⁹ Kings sometimes stood as godfathers, and their laws so venerated this relationship as to establish peculiar provisions to punish the man who slew another's godson or godfather.¹⁰ On the death of the father, the children were ordered to remain under the care of the mother, who was to provide them with sustenance; for this she was to be allowed six shillings, a cow in summer, and an ox in winter; but his relations were to occupy the frum-stol, the head seat, until the boy became of age.¹¹

The Northmen were in the habit of exposing their children. The Anglo-Saxons seem not to have been unacquainted with this

⁴ Hist. Rames. 3 Gale, x. Script. 387. 405.

⁵ Sax. Dict. App.

⁶ Wanley, Catal. Sax. p. 196.

⁷ Wilkins Leg. Anglo-Sax. p. 14.

⁸ Tha cild the læg on tham cradele, *ibid.* p. 145.

⁹ Wilkins, p. 25.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 26.

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 20.

inhumanity ; as one of the laws of Ina provides, that for the fostering of a foundling six shillings should be allowed the first year, twelve the next, thirty the third, and afterwards according to his wite, or his personal appearance and beauty.¹²

Bede mentions, that their period of infancy ended with the seventh year, and that the first year of their childhood began with the eighth.¹³ In the early stage, he exhibits the person of whom he speaks as amusing himself with his play-fellows in the tricks and sports of his age, but as excelling in his dexterity, and in his power of pursuing them without fatigue.¹⁴ It is hardly worth a line to remark, that the Anglo-Saxon child must have resembled every other : restless activity without an object, sport without reasoning, grief without impression, and caprice without affectation, are the usual characteristics of our earliest years in every age and climate.

As the Anglo-Saxons were not a literary people, it is natural that their childish occupations should be the exercises of muscular agility. Leaping, running, wrestling, and every contention and contortion of limb which love of play or emulation could excite, were their favourite sports. Bede describes his hero as boasting of his superior dexterity, and as joining with no small crowd of boys in their accustomed wrestlings in a field, where, as usual, he says, they writhed their limbs in various but unnatural flexures.¹⁵

The names of the Anglo-Saxons were imposed, as with us, in their infancy, by their parents. In several charters it is mentioned, that the persons therein alluded to had been called from their cradles by the names expressed, and which they had received, “ not from accident, but from the will of their parents.”¹⁶

Their names seem to have been frequently compound words, rather expressive of caprice than of appropriate meaning. The appellation of Mucil, “ large,” which Alfred’s wife’s

¹² Wilkins, p. 19.

¹³ Bede Vit. Cuthb. c. 1. p. 229.

¹⁴ Bede, *ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 230.

¹⁶ MS. Claud. B. vi. p. 34 et 62, &c.

father bore," may have been suggested by the size of the new-born infant; as hwithyse, "the white boy," or Egbert, "bright eye," might have been imposed from some peculiar appearance. But the following names, when considered as applied first in infancy, appear to be as fantastic, and as much the effusions of vanity, as the lofty names so dear to modern parents:

Æthelwulf,	the noble wolf.
Berhtwulf,	the illustrious wolf.
Eadwulf,	the prosperous wolf.
Ealdwulf,	the old wolf.
Æthelwyn,	noble in battle, or the noble man.
Eadric,	happy and rich.
Ælfred,	an elf in council.
Hundberht,	the illustrious hound.
Heardberht,	the illustrious protector.
Æthelheard,	the noble protector.
Sigered,	victorious counsel.
Sigeric,	victorious and rich.
Æthelred,	noble in council.
Eadmund,	the prosperous patron.
Eadwin,	prosperous in battle.
Ælfheag,	tall as an elf.
Dunstan,	the mountain-stone.
Æthelbald,	noble and bold.
Wulfric,	powerful as a wolf.
Eadward,	the prosperous guardian.
Ethelstan,	the noble stone.

Of the female names, the meaning is more applicable, and sometimes displays better taste. We give the following as specimens, taken as they occurred:

Æthelswytha,	very noble.
Selethrytha,	a good threatener.

²⁷ Asser, p. 19.

Elfhild,	the elf of battle.
Beage,	the bracelet.
Ethelfritha,	noble and powerful.
Adeleve,	the noble wife.
Eadburh,	the happy pledge.
Heaburge,	tall as a castle.
Eadfled,	the happy pregnancy.
Adelfleda,	the noble pregnancy.
Ælfgiva,	the elf favor.
Eadgifa,	the happy gift.
Æthelgifa,	the noble gift.
Wynfreda,	the peace of man.
Æthelhild,	the noble war goddess.
Ælfthrythe,	threatening as an elf.

We will subjoin a few specimens of the names prevailing in the same families :

A father and three daughters :

Dudda.

Deorwyn, dear to man.

Deorswythe, very dear.

Golde, golden.

A father and his four sons :

Æthelwyn,

Æthelwold,

Alfwold,

Athelsin,

Æthelwyn.

A brother and two sisters :

Leonric,

Adelfled,

Adeleve.

A husband, wife, and daughter :

Ridda,

Bugcga,

Heaburge.

To which we may add,

Ethelwulph and his four sons :

Ethelbald, Ethelred,
Ethelbert, Alfred.

It has been a subject of discussion, whether the Anglo-Saxons used surnames. There can be no question that many were distinguished by appellations added to their original, or Christian names. Thus we find a person called Wulfsic se blaca, or the pale; Thurceles hwitan, or the white; others Æthelwerde Stameran, and Godwine Dreflan. Sometimes a person is designated from his habitation, as Ælfric at Bertune; Leonmære at Biggrafan. Very often the addition expresses the name of his father, as Ælfgar Ælfan suna, Ælmær Ælfrices suna, Sired Ælfrides suna, Godwine Wolfnothes suna, or more shortly Wulfrig Madding; Badenoth Beotting. The office, trade, affinity, or possession, is frequently applied to distinguish the individuals mentioned in the charters; as Leofwine Ealdorman, Sweigen Scyldwirhta, Eadwig his mæg, Ægelpig munuc, Osword preost, Leowine se Canon, Heording gerefa, and such like.¹⁸ But although it is certain that such additional appellations were occasionally used by the Anglo-Saxons, yet they appear to have been but personal distinctions, and not to have been appropriated by them as family names in the manner of surnames with us. In the progress of civilization, the convenience of a permanent family denomination was so generally felt as to occasion the adoption of the custom. It is probable that the first permanent surnames were the appellations of the places of birth, or residence, or a favorite ancestor. To these the caprice of individual choice or popular fancy, the hereditary pursuit of peculiar trades, and the continued possession of certain offices, added many others, especially in towns. But this custom, of appropriating a permanent appellation to particular families, became established in the period which succeeded the Norman conquest.

¹⁸ See Hickee's Dissert. Epist. p. 22—25.

CHAP. II.

Their Education.

WE cannot detail the particular course of education by which the Anglo-Saxons conducted their children to maturity, but some information may be gleaned. Their society was divided into two orders of men—laymen and ecclesiastics. Among the latter as much provision was made for intellectual improvement as the general darkness of the period would allow. The laity were more contented with ignorance; and neglecting the mind, of whose powers and nature they knew nothing, they laboured to increase the hardihood and agility of the body, and the intrepidity, perhaps the fierceness of the spirit.

Some men, rising above the level of their age, endeavoured to recommend the use of schools. Thus Sigebert, in the seventh century, having enlarged his mind during his exile in France, as soon as he regained the East Anglian throne, established a school in his dominions for youth to be instructed in learning.¹ So we find in Alfred's time, and under his improving auspices, most of the noble, and many of the inferior orders, were put under the care of masters, with whom they learnt both Latin and Saxon books, and also writing, that "before they cultivated the arts adapted to manly strength, like hunting, and such others as suited the noble, they might make themselves acquainted with liberal knowledge." Hence Edward and Ælfthrythe are stated by Asser to have studiously learnt Psalms and Saxon books, and chiefly Saxon poetry.² But among the laity, these were transient gleams of intellectual sunshine, neither general nor permanent. The great and powerful undervalued knowledge; hence Alfred's brothers did not offer to attain the faculty of reading which

CHAP.
II.

¹ Bede.

² Asser.

he was tempted to acquire.³ Hence, even kings state in their charters, that they signed with the cross, because they were unable to write;⁴ and hence so many of Alfred's earls, gerefas and thegns, who had been illiterate all their lives, were compelled by his wise severity to learn in their mature age, that they might not discharge their duties with such shameful insufficiency. It is mentioned on this occasion, that those who from age or want of capacity could not learn to read themselves, were obliged to have their son, kinsman, or, if they had none, one of their servants taught, that they might at least be read to, and be rescued from the total ignorance with which they had so long been satisfied. Asser expresses the great lamentations of these well-born, but untaught men, that they had not studied such things in their youth.⁵ Nothing can more strongly display the general want of even that degree of education which our poorest charity children receive, than these circumstances.

The clergy were the preceptors of those who sought to learn; and though Alfred tells us how few even of these could read, yet our history of the Anglo-Saxon literature will shew some very brilliant exceptions. Such as they were, however, to them the moral and intellectual education of the age was entrusted. Thus Aldhelm's father, a prince, put him under the tuition of the Abbot Adrian.⁶ Thus the Irish monk Maildulf, who settled at Malmsbury, and was well skilled in Greek and Latin, took scholars to earn subsistence.⁷ From a passage in the biographer of Wilfred, we learn that children, who afterwards pursued the paths of ambition, received, in the first part of their lives, instruction from ecclesiastics. He says of Wilfrid, a bishop in the eighth century, "Princes and noblemen sent their children to him to be brought up,

³ Asser.

⁴ In a MS. charter of Wihtried, in the possession of the late Mr. Astle, to the

king's mark was added, "ad ejus confirmationem pro ignorantia literarum."

⁵ Asser.

⁶ Malmsb. 3 Gale, 338.

⁷ Ibid.

“ that they might be dedicated to God if they should chuse
“ it; or that when full grown, he might present them in
“ armour to the king, if they preferred it.”⁸

When they reached the age of fourteen, the aspiring, or the better conditioned, prepared themselves for arms. It was after completing his thirteenth year that Wilfrid, who had not then decided on a religious life, began to think of quitting the paternal roof. He obtained such arms, horses, and garments, for himself and his boys, as were necessary to enable him to present himself to the royal notice. With these he travelled till he reached the queen of the province. He met there some of the nobles at her court, whom he had attended at his father's house. They praised him, and introduced him to the queen, by whom he was graciously received. As he afterwards chose the path of devotion, she recommended him to one of the nobles who accompanied the king, but who was induced, by the pressure of a paralytic disease, to exchange the court for the cloister.⁹

The Anglo-Saxons distinguished the period between childhood and manhood by the term *cnihtade*, knighthood. It is stated in Ina's laws, “ that a *cniht* of ten winters old “ might give evidence;”¹⁰ and Bede's expression, of a boy about eight years old, is translated by Alfred “ *wæs eahta “ wintra cniht.*”¹¹ A king also mentions of a circumstance, that he saw it *cniht wesende*, being a *cniht*, or while a boy.¹² It will be considered in another place how far the term bore the meaning of chivalry among the Anglo-Saxons. A daughter was under the power of her parents till the age of thirteen or fourteen, when she had the disposal of her person herself; at fifteen, a son had the right of choosing his path of life, and might then become a monk, but not before.¹³

⁸ Eddius, p. 62.

⁹ Ib. p. 44.

¹⁰ Wilkins Leg. p. 16.

¹¹ Bede, v. c. 18. Alf. Transl. 635.

¹² Bede. Alf. Transl. p. 518.

¹³ 1 Wilk. Concil. 130.

In this season of cnihthood, or youth, we find them striving to excel each other at a horse-race. A person in Bede describes himself as one of a party, who on their journey came to a spacious plain, adapted to a horse-course. The young men were desirous to prove their horses in the greater course, or as the Saxon translator expresses it, that we might run and try which had the swiftest horse. The individual spoken of at last joined them, but his animated horse, attempting to clear a concavity in the way, by a violent leap, the youth was thrown senseless against a stone, and with difficulty brought to life.¹⁴

The Saxon youth seem to have been accustomed to habits of docility and obedience. The word cniht was also used to express a servant;¹⁵ and Wilfrid is characterized as having in his youth attentively ministered to all his father's visitors, whether royal attendants or their servants.¹⁶

The education of the Saxons was much assisted by the emigrations or visits of Irish ecclesiastics. We have mentioned Maildulf at Malmsbury; it is also intimated, in Dunstan's life, that some Irishmen had settled at Glastonbury, whose books Dunstan diligently studied. This great, but ambitious man, was arraigned in his youth for studying the vain songs of his Pagan ancestors, and the frivolous charms of histories.¹⁷

After the prevalence of Christianity, a portion of the youth was taken into the monasteries. We have a description, in Saxon, of the employment of the boys there. One of these, in answer to the question, 'What have you done to-day?' says, "Many things; when I heard the knell, I arose from
" my bed and went to church, and sang the song for before
" day with the brethren, and afterwards of All Saints, and at
" the dawn of day the song of praise. After these I said the

¹⁴ Bede, lib. v. c. 6.¹⁵ Gen. c. xxiv. v. 65. Luke, xii. v. 45.¹⁶ Eddius, p. 44.¹⁷ MS. Cleop. B. 13.

" first and seventh Psalms, with the litany and first mass.
" Afterwards, before noon, we did the mass for the day, and
" after this, at mid-day, we sang, and eat, and drank, and
" slept, and again we rose and sang the noon, and now we
" are here before thee ready to hear what thou shalt say."¹⁸
They had afterwards to sing the even and the night song. On
being questioned why they learnt so industriously, he is made
to reply, " Because we would not be like the stupid animals,
" who know nothing but their grass and water."¹⁸

¹⁸ MS. Tib. A. 3.

C H A P. III.

*Their Food.*BOOK
VIII.

THEIR food was that mixture of animal and vegetable diet which always attends the progress of civilization. They reared various sorts of corn in inclosed and cultivated lands, and they fed domesticated cattle for the uses of their table.

For their animal food they had oxen, sheep, and great abundance of swine; they used, likewise, fowls, deer, goats, and hares; but though the horned cattle are not unfrequently mentioned in their grants and wills, and were often the subjects of exchange, yet the animals most numerous stated are the swine. The country in all parts abounded with wood; and woods are not often particularized without some notice of the swine which they contained, or were capable of maintaining. They also frequently appear in wills. Thus Alfred, a nobleman, gives to his relations an hide of land, with one hundred swine; and he directs one hundred swine to be given for his owl to one minister, and the same number to another; and to his two daughters he gives two thousand swine.¹ So Elfhelm gives land to St. Peter's at Westminster, on the express condition that they feed two hundred of these animals for his wife.²

They eat various kinds of fish; but, of this description of their animal food, the species which is most profusely noticed is the eel. They used eels as abundantly as swine. Two grants are mentioned, each yielding one thousand eels,³ and by another two thousand were received as an annual rent. Four thousand eels were a yearly present from the monks of Ramsay

¹ Will. in App. Sax. Dict.² Ibid.³ 3 Gale, 477.

to those of Peterborough.⁴ We read of two places purchased for twenty-one pounds, wherein sixteen thousand of these fish were caught⁵ every year; and in one charta twenty fishermen are stated, who furnished, during the same period, sixty thousand eels to the monastery.⁶ Eel dikes are often mentioned in the boundaries of their lands.

In the dialogues composed by Elfric to instruct the Anglo-Saxon youths in the Latin language, which are yet preserved to us,⁷ we have some curious information concerning the manners and trades of our ancestors. In one colloquy the fisherman is asked, 'What gettest thou by thine art?' "Big loaves, clothing, and money." 'How do you take them?' "I ascend my ship, and cast my net into the river; I also throw in a hook, a bait, and a rod." 'Suppose the fishes are unclean?' "I throw the unclean out, and take the clean for food." 'Where do you sell your fish?' "In the city." 'Who buys them?' "The citizens; I cannot take so many as I can sell." 'What fishes do you take?' "Eels, haddocks, minnies, and eelpouts, skate, and lampreys,⁸ and whatever swims in the river." 'Why do you not fish in the sea?' "Sometimes I do; but rarely, because a great ship is necessary there." 'What do you take in the sea?' "Herrings and salmons, porpoises, sturgeons, oysters, and crabs, muscles, wincles, cockles, flounders, plaice, lobsters,⁹ and such like." 'Can you take a whale?' "No, it is dangerous to take a whale; it is safer for me to go to the river with my ship than to go with many ships to hunt whales." 'Why?' "Because it is more pleasant to me to take fish which I can kill with one blow; yet many take whales without danger, and then they get a great price, but I dare not, from the fearfulness of my mind."

This extract shews the uniformity of human taste on the

⁴ 3 Gale, 456.

⁵ Dugdale Mon. p. 244.

⁶ Ibid. 235.

⁷ In the Cotton library, MS. Tib. A. 3.

⁸ The Saxon names for these are, ælas,

hacodas, mynas, & æleputan, sceotan, & lampredan. MS. ib.

⁹ Herinegas & leaxas, mereswyn & stirian, ostrean & crabban, muslan, wine winclan sæcoccas, fage, flocc, lopystran. MS. Tib. A. 3.

main articles of food. Fish was such a favourite diet, that the supply never equalled the demand, and the same fishes were then in request which we select, though our taste has declined for the porpoises. The porpoise is mentioned in a convention between an archbishop and the clergy at Bath, which enumerates six of them under the name of mere-swine, or the sea-swine, and thirty thousand herrings.¹⁰

In the earlier periods of the Anglo-Saxon colonization, their use of fish was more limited; for we read in Bede, that Wilfrid rescued the people of Sussex from famine in the eighth century by teaching them to catch fish: "For though the sea and their rivers abounded with fish, they had no more skill in the art than to take eels. The servants of Wilfrid threw into the sea nets made out of those by which they had obtained eels, and thus directed them to a new source of plenty."¹¹ It may account for Wilfrid's superior knowledge, to remark, that he had travelled over the continent to Rome.

It is an article in the Penitientiale of Egbert, that fish might be bought though dead.¹² The same treatise allows herrings to be eaten, and states, that when boiled they are salutary in fever and diarrhoea, and that their gall mixed with pepper is good for a sore mouth!¹³

Horse-flesh, which our delicacy rejects with aversion, appears to have been used, though it became unfashionable as their civilization advanced. The Penitientiale says, "Horse-flesh is not prohibited, though many families will not buy it."¹⁴ But in the council held in 785, in Northumbria, before Alfwold, and in Mercia, before Offa, it was discountenanced. "Many among you eat horses, which is not done by any Christians in the East. Avoid this."¹⁵

But though animal food was in much use among our ancestors, it was as it is with us, and perhaps will be in every

¹⁰ MS. CCC. apud Cantab. Miscell. G. p. 73.

¹¹ Bede, lib. iv. c. 13.

¹² 1 Wilkins Conc. p. 123.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 151.

country in which agriculture has become habitual, and population much increased, rather the food of the wealthier part of the community than of the lower orders.

That it could not be afforded by all is clear, from the incident of a king and queen visiting a monastery, and enquiring, when they saw the boys eating only bread, if they were allowed nothing else. The answer returned was, that the scanty means of the society could afford no better. The queen then petitioned the king to enable them to provide additional food.¹⁶

They had wheat and barley in general use, but their prices were different; wheat, like meat, was a dearer article, and therefore less universal. It is said of the abbey of St. Edmund, that the young monks eat barley bread because the income of the establishment would not admit of their feeding twice or thrice a day on wheaten bread.¹⁷ Their corn was thrashed with a flail like our own, and ground by the simple mechanism of mills, of which great numbers are particularized in the Domesday Survey. In their most ancient law we read of a king's grinding servant;¹⁸ but both water-mills and wind-mills occur very frequently in their conveyances after that time.

They used warm bread.¹⁹ The life of St. Neot states, that the peasant's wife placed on her oven "the loaves which some call loudas."²⁰ In the agreement of one of their social gilds, a broad loaf well besewon and well gesyflod is noticed.²¹ In one grant of land we find six hundred loaves reserved as a rent,²² and oftentimes cheeses. They were allowed to use milk, cheese, and eggs, on their fast days.²³ Some individual devotees chose to be very rigorous. In 735, a lady is mentioned, in Oxford, of a noble family, who mortified herself by lying on the bare ground, and subsisting on broth made of the

¹⁶ MS. Cotton. Claud. C. 9. p. 128.

¹⁷ Dugd. Mon. p. 296.

¹⁸ Wilkins's Leg. Sax. p. 2.

¹⁹ Bede, ed. Smith, p. 234.

²⁰ MS. Cott. Claud. A. 5. p. 157.

²¹ Dugd. Mon. p. 278.

²² Sax. Chron. 75.

²³ Wilk. Leg. Sax. p. 194.

poorest herbs, and on a small quantity of barley bread.²⁴ In the same century Boniface, the Anglo-Saxon missionary, complained of some priests, that they did not eat of the meats which God had given, and that others fed on milk and honey, rejecting animal food.²⁵

Abstinence too rigorous was not, however, a general fault of the Anglo-Saxon monks. On the contrary, whenever the interior of a well-endowed monastery is opened to our view, we meet with an abundance which precluded mortification.²⁶

Orchards were cultivated,²⁷ and we find figs, grapes, nuts, almonds, pears, and apples mentioned.²⁸ Lac acidum, perhaps butter-milk or whey, was used in a monastery in very handsome vessels, called creches, from Hokeday to Michaelmas, and lac dulce from Michaelmas to Martinmas. In the same place placentas were allowed in the Easter and Whitsun weeks, and on some other festivals, and broth or soups every day.²⁹ In another monastery we find land given to provide beans, salt, and honey for the brothers.³⁰ From the panegyric of Aldhelm, we may infer that honey was a favourite diet; for he says, that it excels all the dishes of delicacies and peppered broths.³¹

In the MS. before mentioned a colloquy occurs with the baker (bæcere). ‘Of what use is your art? we can live long without you.’ “You may live through some space without my art, but not long, nor so well; for without my craft every table would seem empty, and without bread (hlæfe) all meat would become nauseous. I strengthen the heart of man, and little ones could not do without me.”³²

In the same MS. the food of children is thus mentioned:

²⁴ Dugd. Mon. 173.

²⁵ Bon. Ep. Mag. Bib. Pal. xvi. p. 50.

²⁶ The allowances of the Abingdon monastery may be taken as a specimen. See them in Dugd. Mon. p. 104.

²⁷ 3 Gale Script. 490.

²⁸ Ingulf. p. 50.

²⁹ Dugd. Mon. p. 104. The creche contained septem pollices ad profunditatem a summitate unius usque ad profundum lateris ulterius. Ibid.

³⁰ 3 Gale Script. 445.

³¹ Ald. de Laud. Virg. p. 296.

³² MS. Cott. Tib. A. 3.

‘What do you eat to-day?’ ‘As yet I feed on flesh-meat, because I am a child, living under the rod.’ ‘What more do you eat?’ ‘Herbs, eggs, fish, cheese, butter, and beans, and all clean things I eat with many thanks.’³³

They appear to have used great quantities of salt, from the numerous grants of land which specify salt-pans as important articles. In the end of autumn they killed and salted much meat for their winter consumption. It is probable that their provision of winter fodder for their cattle was very imperfect, and that salted meat was in a great measure their food till the spring reclothed the fields with verdure. One part of the dialogue above alluded to is on the salter.

‘Salter! what does your craft profit us?’ ‘Much: none of you can enjoy pleasure in your dinner or supper, unless my art be propitious to him.’ ‘How?’ ‘Which of you can enjoy savoury meats without the smack of salt? Who could sell the contents of his cellar or his storehouses, without my craft? Lo! all butter (buter gethweor) and cheese (cys gerun) would perish, unless you used me.’³⁴

The Anglo-Saxon ladies were not excluded from the society of the male sex at their meals. It was at dinner that the king’s mother urged Dunstan to accept the vacant bishopric,³⁵ and it appears from many passages in Saxon writings, and from the drawings in their MSS. that both sexes were together at their seasons of refreshment.

We have an account of Ethelstan’s dining with his relation Ethelfleda. The royal providers, it says, knowing that the king had promised her the visit, came the day before to see if every preparation was ready and suitable. Having inspected all, they told her, “You have plenty of every thing, provided your mead holds out.” The king came with a great number of attendants at the appointed time, and, after hearing mass, entered joyfully in the dinner apartment; but unfortunately in the first salutation, their copious draughts exhausted

³³ MS. Cott. Tib. A. 3.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ MS. Cott. Cleop. B. 13, and Nero, C. 7.

the mead vessel. Dunstan's sagacity had foreseen the event, and provided against it; and though "the cup-bearers, as is the custom at royal feasts, were *all the day* serving it up in cut horns, and other vessels of various sizes," the liquor was not found to be deficient. This, of course, very much delighted his majesty and his companions; and as Dunstan chose to give it a miraculous appearance, it procured him infinite credit.³⁶

An historian of the twelfth century contrasts, with much regret, the fashion, introduced by the Normans at court, of only one entertainment a day, with the custom of one of our preceding kings, who feasted his courtiers daily with four ample banquets. He contends that parsimony produced the direful change, though it was ascribed to dignity.³⁷ Many good customs have originated from selfish causes; but no one will now dispute, that both mental and moral refinement must have been much advanced by this diminution of the incitements and the opportunities of gluttony and inebriety. We may remember of the king Hardicanute, so celebrated for his conviviality, that he died at a feast.

A few circumstances may be added, of their fasting. It is mentioned in Edgar's regulations, as a part of the penance of a rich man, that he should fast on bread, green herbs, and water.³⁸ It is expressed in another part, that a layman during his penitence should eat no flesh, nor drink any thing that might inebriate.³⁹ The law of Wihtræd severely punished the nonobservance of fast-days. If any man gave meat to his servants on these days, he was declared liable to the pillory, or literally the neck-catch, heals-fang. If the servant eat it of his own accord, he was fined six shillings, or was to suffer in his hide.⁴⁰

³⁶ Cleop. B. 13. p. 67, and Acta Sanct. 29 May, p. 349, 350.

³⁷ Hen. Hunt. lib. vi. p. 365. Malmsbury remarks that the profusion of the English

feasts was increased after the Danish visits, p. 248.

³⁸ Wilk. Leg. Sax. 97.

³⁹ Ibid. 94.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 11.

CHAP. IV.

Their Drinks and Cookery.

ALE and mead were their favourite drinks, and wine was an occasional luxury. Of the ale three sorts are noticed. In a charter, two tuns of clear ale, and ten mittan or measures of Welsh ale are reserved.¹ In another, a cumb full of lithes, or mild ale.² Warm wine is also mentioned.³

The answer of the lad, in the Saxon colloquy, to the question, what he drank, was, "Ale if I have it, or water if I have not." On being asked why he does not drink wine, he says, "I am not so rich that I can buy me wine, and wine is not the drink of children or the weak-minded, but of the elders and the wise."⁴

In the ancient calendar of the eleventh century, there are various figures pictured, to accompany the different months. In April three persons appear sitting and drinking: one person is pouring out liquor into a horn; another is holding a horn to his mouth.⁵

We have the list of the liquors used at a great Anglo-Saxon feast, in a passage of Henry of Huntingdon, which describes an atrocious catastrophe.

At a feast in the king's hall at Windsor, Harold, the son of Godwin, was serving the Confessor with wine, when Tosti, his brother, stimulated by envy at his possessing a larger portion of the royal favour than himself, seized Harold by the hair in the king's presence. In a rage, Tosti left the company, and went to Hereford, where his brother had ordered a great royal

¹ Sax. Chron. 75.

² Two tuns full of hlutres aloth, a cumb full of lithes aloth, and a cumb full of we-

liscs aloth, are the gafol reserved in a grant of Offa. Dugd. Mon. p. 126.

³ Bede, 257. ⁴ MS. Tib. A. 3. ⁵ Ibid. B. 5.

banquet to be prepared. There he seized his brother's attendants, and cutting off their heads and limbs, he placed them in the vessels of wine, mead, ale, pigment, morat, and cyder. He then sent to the king a message, that he was going to his farm, where he should find plenty of salt meat, but had taken care to carry some with him.⁶ The pigment was a sweet and odoriferous liquor, made of honey, wine, and spiceries of various kinds. The morat was made of honey, diluted with the juice of mulberries.⁷

As the canons were severe on drunkenness, though the manners of society made all their regulations ineffectual, it was thought necessary to define what was considered to be improper and penal intoxication. "This is drunkenness, when the state of the mind is changed, the tongue stammers, the eyes are disturbed, the head is giddy, the belly is swelled, and pain follows." To atone for this, fasts, proportioned in duration to the quality of the offender, were enjoined.⁸

It will not be uninteresting to add the description of a feast, as given in Judith by an Anglo-Saxon poet:

Then was Holofernes
Enchanted with the wine of men:
In the hall of the guests
He laughed and shouted,
He roared and dinned,
That the children of men might hear afar,
How the sturdy one
Stormed and clamoured,
Animated and elated with wine.
He admonished amply
Those sitting on the bench
That they should bear it well.
So was the wicked one all day,
The lord and his men,
Drunk with wine;

⁶ Hen. Hunt. lib. vi. p. 367.

⁷ Du Cange in voc. and Henry's History of England, iv. p. 396.

⁸ Spelm. Concilia, 286.

The stern dispenser of wealth;
Till that they swimming lay,
Over drunk,
All his nobility
As they were death slain.
Their property poured about.
So commanded the lord of men
To fill to those sitting at the feast,
Till the dark night
Approached the children of men.⁹

We have a glance of their customs, as to drinking, in this short passage: "When all were satisfied with their dinner, and the tables were removed, they continued drinking till the evening."¹⁰

They seem to have had places like taverns, or ale-houses, where liquors were sold; for a priest was forbidden by a law to eat or drink at ceapeaethelum, literally places where ale was sold.¹¹

Ethelwold allowed his monastery a great bowl, from which the obbæ of the monks were filled twice a day, for their dinner and supper. On their festivals he allowed them at dinner a sextarium of mead between six, and the same quantity at supper between twelve of the brothers. On certain of the great high feasts of the year, he gave them a measure of wine.¹²

They boiled, baked, and broiled their victuals. We read of their meat dressed in a boiling vessel,¹³ of their fish having been broiled,¹⁴ and of an oven heated for baking loaves.¹⁵ The term abacan is also applied to meat. In the rule of St. Benedict, two sanda, or dishes of sodden syflian, or soup bouilli, are mentioned.¹⁶ Bede mentions a goose that hung on the wall taken down to be boiled.¹⁷ The word seathan, to boil, deserves

⁹ Frag. Judith.

¹⁰ Gale Scrip. iii. p. 441.

¹¹ Wilk. Leg. Sax. 180. So Egbert exhort. Spel. Conc. 260.

¹² Dugd. Mon. 104.

¹³ Bede, p. 255.

¹⁴ Bede, 238.

¹⁵ MS. Vesp. D. 14. p. 146.

¹⁶ MS. Tib. A. 3.

¹⁷ Bede, 255.

notice, because the noun, *seath*, from which it is derivable, implies a pit. As we read in the South Sea islands of the natives dressing their victuals in little pits lined with stones, the expression may have been originally derived from a similar practice. A cook appears as an appendix to every monastery, and it was a character important enough to be inserted in the laws. In the cloisters it was a male office; elsewhere it was chiefly assumed by the female sex. In the dialogue already cited, the cook says, "If you expel me from your society, you would eat your herbs green, and your flesh raw." He is answered, 'We can ourselves seethe what is to be seethed, and broil what things are to be broiled.'¹⁸

They seem to have attended to cookery not merely as a matter of taste, but of indispensable decorum. It was one of their regulations, that if a person eat any thing half dressed, ignorantly, he should fast three days; if knowingly, four days. Perhaps as the uncivilized Northmen were, in their pagan state, addicted to eat raw flesh, the clergy of the Anglo-Saxons were anxious to keep their improved countrymen from relapsing into such barbarous customs.¹⁹

In the drawings which accompany some Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, we have some delineation of their customs at table.²⁰ In one drawing a party is at table, seated with the females by the side of the men in this order: a man, a lady, a man, a lady, two men, and another lady. The two first are looking towards each other, as if talking together; the three in the

¹⁸ MS. Tib.

¹⁹ Spelm. Concil. 287. The same principle perhaps led them to add these regulations: "For eating or drinking what a cat or dog has spoiled, he shall sing an hundred psalms, or fast a day. For giving another any liquor in which a mouse or a weazel shall be found dead, a layman shall do penance for four days; a monk shall sing three hundred psalms." Spelm. Concil. p. 287.

²⁰ The industrious and useful Strutt has

copied these drawings in the first volume of his *Horda Angelecyunnan*. Nothing can more satisfactorily illustrate the manners of our ancestors than such publications of their ornamental drawings; for, as Strutt truly observes in his preface, "though these pictures do not bear the least resemblance of the things they were originally intended to represent, yet they nevertheless are the undoubted characteristics of the customs of that period in which each illuminator or designer lived."

middle are engaged with each other, and so are the two last; each have a cup or horn in their hand. The table is oblong, and covered with a table-cloth that hangs low down from the table; a knife, a horn, a bowl, a dish, and some loaves appear. The men are uncovered; the women have their usual head-dress.²¹

In another drawing, the table is a sharp oval, also covered with an ample cloth; upon it, besides a knife and a spoon, there are a bowl, with a fish, some loaves of bread, and two other dishes. Some part of the costume is more like the manners of Homer's heroes than of modern times. At the angles of the tables two attendants are upon their knees, with a dish in one hand, and each holding up a spit with the other, from which the persons feasting are about to cut something. One of these persons, to whom the servants minister with so much respect, is holding a whole fish with one hand, and a knife in the other.²²

In the drawing which accompanies Lot feasting the angels, the table is oblong, rounded at the ends, and covered with a cloth. Upon it is a bowl, with an animal's head like a pig's; another bowl is full of some round things like apples. These, with loaves, or cakes of bread, seem to constitute the repast. There are two horns upon the table, and one of the angels has a knife.²³ As no forks appear in any of the plates, and are not mentioned elsewhere, we may presume that our ancestors used their hands instead.

There is one drawing of men killing and dressing meat. One man is holding a sheep by his horns, while a lad strikes at its neck with an axe; behind him is a young

²¹ This is in Strutt's work, plate xvi. fig. 2, and is taken from the Cotton MS. Claud. B. 4. The MS. consists of excerpts from the Pentateuch and the book of Joshua, which

are adorned with historical figures, some of which are those above alluded to.

²² See Strutt, plate xvi. fig. 1.

²³ Strutt, plate xvi. fig. 3, and Claud. B. 4.

BOOK
VIII.

man severing an animal's head from his body with an axe. Another has put a long stick, with a hook attached to it, into a cauldron, as if to pull up meat. The cauldron is upon a trivet of four legs as high as the servant's knee, within which the fire is made, and blazing up to the cauldron.²⁴

²⁴ Strutt, plate xvii. fig. 2, and from Claud. in shewing the cookery and feasting of the B. 4. The tapestry of Bayeux is as useful Normans.

CHAP. V.

Their Dress.

THE Anglo-Saxons had become so much acquainted with the conveniences of civilized life as to have both variety and vanity of dress. Some change took place in their apparel after their conversion to Christianity, which rendered their former customs disreputable; for at a council, held in 785, it is said, "You put on your garments in the manner of the Pagans, whom your fathers expelled from the world; an astonishing thing, that you imitate those whose life you always hated."¹

CHAP.
V.

It is difficult at this distance of time to apprehend with precision the meaning of the terms of their dress which time has permitted to reach us, and to state them with that order and illustration which will enable the reader to conceive justly of their costume. The imperfections of our attempt must be excused by its difficulty. We will begin with what we have been able to collect of an Anglo-Saxon lady's dress.

The wife described by Aldhelm has necklaces and bracelets, and also rings with gems on her fingers. Her hair was dressed artificially; he mentions the twisted hairs delicately curled with the iron of those adorning her.

In this part of her dress she was a contrast to the religious virgin, whose hair was entirely neglected.² Their hair was highly valuable and reputable among the Saxon ladies. Judith is perpetually mentioned with epithets allusive to her hair. Her twisted locks are more than once noticed:

The maid of the Creator,
With twisted locks,
Took then a sharp sword.

¹ Concil. Calchut. Spelm. Conc. p. 300.

² Aldhelm de Laud. Virg. p. 307.

She with the twisted locks
Then struck her hateful enemy,
Meditating ill,
With the ruddy sword.

The most illustrious virgin
Conducted and led them,
Resplendent with her twisted locks,
To the bright city of Bethulia.³

The laws mention a free woman, loc bore, wearing her locks as a distinguishing circumstance.⁴ Judith is also described with her ornaments :

The prudent one adorned with gold
Ordered her maidens —

Then commanded he
The blessed virgin
With speed to fetch
To his bed rest,
With bracelets laden,
With rings adorned.⁵

Aldhelm also describes the wife as loving to paint her cheeks with the red colour of stibium.⁶ The art of painting the face is not the creature of refinement; the most barbarous nations seem to be the most liberal in their use of this fancied ornament.

The will of Wynflæd makes us acquainted with several articles of the dress and ornaments of an Anglo-Saxon lady. She gives to Æthelflæda, one of her daughters, her engraved beah, or bracelet, and her covering mantle (mentel). To Eadgyfa, another of her daughters, she leaves her best dun tunic, and her better mantle, and her covering garment. She also mentions her pale tunics, her torn cyrtel, and other linen, web, or garment. She likewise notices her white cyrtel, and the cuffs and ribband (cuffian and bindan).⁷

³ Frag. Judith, ed. Thwaite.

⁴ Wilk. Leg. Sax. p. 6.

⁵ Frag. Jud.

⁶ Aldhelm. p. 307.

⁷ Our great Saxon scholar, Hickes, has given a transcript of this will, in his preface to his Gram. Anglo-Sax. p. 22.

Among the ornaments mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon documents we read of a golden fly, beautifully adorned with gems;⁸ of golden vermiculated necklaces;⁹ of a bulla that had belonged to the grandmother of the lady spoken of;¹⁰ of golden head-bands,¹¹ and of a neck cross.¹²

The ladies had also gowns; for a bishop of Winchester sends as a present "a short gown (gunna) sown in our manner."¹³ Thus we find the mantle, the kirtle, and the gown, mentioned by these names among the Saxons, and even the ornament of cuffs.

In the drawings on the manuscripts of these times, the women appear with a long loose robe, reaching down to the ground, and large loose sleeves. Upon their head is a hood, or veil, which, falling down before, was wrapped round the neck and breast.¹⁴ All the ladies in the drawing have their necks, from the chin, closely wrapped in this manner, and in none of them is a fine waist attempted to be displayed, nor have their heads any other covering than their hood.

In the dress of the men the province of female taste was intruded upon by the ornaments they used. They had sometimes gold and precious stones round their neck,¹⁵ and the men of consequence or wealth usually had expensive bracelets on their arms, and rings on their fingers. It is singular that the bracelets of the male sex were more costly than those allotted to the fair. In an Anglo-Saxon will, the testator bequeaths to his lord a beah, or bracelet, of eighty gold mancusa, and to his lady one of thirty. He had two neck bracelets, one of forty, and another of eighty gold mancusa, and two golden bands.¹⁶ We read of two golden bracelets, and five gold ornaments, called sylas, sent by an Anglo-Saxon to her

⁸ Dugd. Mon. 240.

⁹ Ibid. 263.

¹⁰ Ibid. 268.

¹¹ Thorpe Reg. Roffen. 26, and Mag. Bib. xvi. p. 7.

¹² In the Archbishop's Will. Cott. Lib. MS. Tib. A. 3.

¹³ 16 Mag. Bib. 82. A gown made of otter's skin is mentioned, p. 88.

¹⁴ Strutt's Horda Angelcynn. i. p. 47.

¹⁵ Bede, p. 332.

¹⁶ See the will of Byrhtic in Thorpe's Reg. Roffen. p. 25; also in Hicke's Thes.

friend.¹⁷ Their rings are frequently mentioned: an archbishop bequeaths one in his will,¹⁸ and a king sent a gold ring, with twelve sagi, as a present to a bishop.¹⁹ The ring appears to have been worn on the finger next to the little finger, and on the right hand, for a Saxon law calls that the gold finger; and we find a right hand was once cut off on account of this ornament.

In some of the stately apparel of the male sex, we see that fondness for gorgeous finery, which their sturdier character might have been expected to have disdained. We read of silk garments woven with golden eagles;²⁰ so a king's coronation garment was of silk, woven with gold flowers,²¹ and his cloak is mentioned distinguished by its costly workmanship, and its gold and gems.²² Such was the avidity for these distinctions, that Elfric, in his canons, found it necessary to exhort the clergy not to be ranc, that is, proud, with their rings, and not to have their garments made too ranclike.²³

They had silk, linen, and woollen garments. A bishop gave in the eighth century, as a present to one abroad, a woollen tunic, and another of linen, adding, "as it was the custom of the Anglo-Saxons to wear it."²⁴ The use of linen was not uncommon; for it is remarked, as a peculiarity of a nun, that she rarely wore linen, but chiefly woollen garments.²⁵

Silk, from its cost, cannot have been common; but it was often used by the great and wealthy. Ethelbert, king of Kent, gave a silken part of dress, called an armilcasia.²⁶ Bede mentions two silken pallia of incomparable workmanship.²⁷

¹⁷ Mag. Bib. Pat. xvi. p. 92. Wynfleda, in her will, leaves a man a wooden cup adorned with gold, that he might augment his beah with the gold. Hicke's Pref.

¹⁸ Cott. MS. Claud. C. 125.

¹⁹ Mag. Bib. xvi. p. 89.

²⁰ Ingulf. p. 61.

²¹ Ibid.

²² 3 Gale Script. 494.

²³ Wilk, Leg. Sax. 158. Ranc and ranc-like originally meant proud and gorgeous.

The words have now become appropriated to express dignity of situation.

²⁴ 16 Mag. Bib. p. 82.

²⁵ Bede, lib. iv. c. 19. The interior tunic of St. Neot is described to have been ex panno villosa, in the Irish manner. Dugd. Mon. 368.

²⁶ Dugd. Mon. 24.

²⁷ Bede, p. 297. A pallia holoserica is mentioned as a present, in Mag. Bib. xvi. p. 97.

His own remains were inclosed in silk.²⁸ It often adorned the altars of the church; and we read of a present to a West-Saxon bishop of a casula, expressed to be not entirely of silk, but mixed with goats' wool.²⁹

The delineations of the Saxon manuscripts almost universally represent the hair of the men as divided from the crown to the forehead, and combed down the sides of the head in waving ringlets. Their beards were continuations of their whiskers on each side, meeting the hair from the chin, but there dividing, and ending in two forked points. Young men usually, and sometimes servants, are represented without beards. The heads of the soldiers are covered; but workmen, and even nobles, are frequently represented, as in the open air, without any hats or caps.³⁰

To have a beard was forbidden to the clergy.³¹ But the historian of Malmsbury informs us, that in the time of Harold the Second, the English laity shaved their beards, but allowed the hair of their upper lip a full growth.³² The tapestry of Bayeux displays this costume: Harold and most of the figures have their mustachios, but no beards. King Edward, however, has his full beard. In the drawings of the Evangelists in the fine Cotton MS.³³ Mark and John have neither beards nor mustachios, but Matthew and Luke have both.

They had shoes, or scoh, with thongs. Bede's account of Cuthbert is curious: he says, when the saint had washed the feet of those who came to him, they compelled him to take off his own shoes, that his feet might also be made clean, for so little did he attend to his bodily appearance, that he often kept his shoes, which were of leather, on his feet for several months together, frequently from Easter to Easter, without taking them off.³⁴ From this anecdote we may infer that they had not stockings. Sometimes, however, the legs of the

²⁸ Mag. Bib. xvi. p. 88. ²⁹ Ibid. p. 50.

³⁰ See the plates in Strutt's Hord. Angel.

³¹ Wilk. Leg. Sax. p. 85.

³² Malmsb. lib. iii. ³³ Nero, D. 4.

³⁴ Bede Vit. Cuthb. p. 243. In the life of St. Neot he is said to have lost his scoh; he saw a fox having the thwanges of his shoe in his mouth. Vesp. D. xiv. p. 144.

men appear in the drawings as covered half way up with a kind of bandage wound round, or else with a tight stocking reaching above the knee.³⁵

The Anglo-Saxons represented in the Bayeux tapestry are dressed in this manner; both the great and their inferiors have caps or bonnets on their heads, which are kept on even in the presence of the king, sitting with his sceptre on the throne. The steersman of one of the ships has a hat on, with a projecting flap turning upwards. Most of the figures have close coats, with sleeves to the wrists.³⁶ They are girded round them with a belt, and have loose skirts like kelts, but not reaching quite to the knee. Harold on horseback, with his falcon, has breeches, which do not cover his knee, and a cloak flowing behind him. His knights have breeches covering the knees, and cloaks, which, like Harold's, are buttoned on the right shoulder.³⁷ One of those standing before the king has a cloak, or sagum, which falls down to its full length, and reaches just below the bend of the knee.³⁸ Harold, when he is about to go into the ship, wears a sort of jacket with small flaps. In the ship he appears with his cloak and the surrounding skirts, which are exhibited with a border; but when he takes the oath to William, he has a cloak reaching nearly to his heels, and buttoned on the breast. They have always belts on. Most of them have shoes, which set close round the ancle; others, even the great men, sometimes have none.³⁹

³⁵ Strutt, Hord. Ang. p. 47. In Saint Benedict's rule, MS. Tib. A. 3. socks (soccas) and stockings (hosan) are mentioned; also two other coverings for the legs and feet, called meon and fiand reaf fota, and the earm slife for the upper part of the body.

³⁶ Strutt has given a complete drawing of a Saxon close coat, in Tab. 15. It appears to have been put over the head like a shirt.

³⁷ For a description of this clasp or button, see Strutt, p. 46.

³⁸ It was probably of cloaks like these that Charlemagne exclaimed, "Of what use

"are these little cloaks? We cannot be covered by them in bed. When I am on horseback they cannot defend me from the wind and rain; and when we retire for other occasions, I am starved with cold in my legs." St. Gall. ap. Bouquet Recueil, tom. 7.

³⁹ Strutt remarks from the drawings, that the kings and nobles, when in their state dress, were habited in a loose coat, which reached down to their ancles, and had over that a long robe, fastened, over both shoulders, on the middle of the breast, with a

In the history of the Lombards, the Anglo-Saxon garments are stated to have been loose and flowing, and chiefly made of linen, adorned with broad borders, woven or embroidered with various colours.⁴⁰ In the MSS. of the Saxon gospels, Nero, D. 4. the four Evangelists are drawn in colours, and the garments in which they are represented may be considered as specimens of the Anglo-Saxon dress.

Matthew has a purple under-gown, or vest, rather close, coming down to the wrists, with a yellow border at the neck, wrists, and the bottom. His upper robe is green, with red stripes, much looser than the other. His feet have no shoes, but a lacing, as for sandals. There is a brown curtain, with rings, and a yellow bottom. His stool has a brown cushion, but no back. He writes on his knee.

Mark wears a purple robe, striped with blue, buttoned at the neck, where it opens and shews an under garment of light blue, striped with red. His cushion is blue; he has a footstool and a small round table.

Luke's under-dress is a sort of lilac, with light green stripes. Over this is a purple robe with red stripes. The arm is of the colour of the vest, and comes through the robe. His wrist and neck have a border.

John's under-garment is a pea-green with red stripes; his upper robe is purple with blue stripes; this is very loose, and, opening at the breast, shews the dress beneath. These pictures shew what many passages also imply, that our ancestors were fond of many colours.⁴¹ The council in 785 ordered the clergy not to wear the tintured colours of India, nor

clasp or buckle. He adds, that the edges and bottoms of their coats, as well as of their robes, were often trimmed with a broad gold edging, or else flowered with different colours. The soldiers and common people wore close coats, reaching only to the knee, and a short cloak over their left shoulder which buckled on the right. The kings and nobles were habited in common in a dress similar to this, but richer

and more elegant. Strutt. Hord. Ang. i. p. 46.

⁴⁰ See before.

⁴¹ Bede mentions, that in Saint Cuthbert's monastery they used clothing of the natural wool, and not of varied or precious colours, p. 242. Two cloaks are mentioned among the letters of Boniface, one of which is said to be of very artful workmanship, the other of a tintured colour.

precious garments.⁴² The clergy, whose garments were thus compulsorily simplified, endeavoured to extend their fashion to those of the laity. Boniface, the Anglo-Saxon missionary, in his letter to the archbishop of Canterbury, inveighs against luxuries of dress, and declares that those garments which are adorned with very broad studs, and images of worms, announce the coming of Anti-Christ.⁴³ In the same spirit, at the council of Cloveshoe, the nuns were exhorted to pass their time rather in reading books and singing hymns, than in weaving and working garments of empty pride in diversified colours.⁴⁴ That they lined their garments with furs made from sables, beavers, and foxes, or, when they wished to be least expensive, with the skins of lambs or cats, we learn from the life of Wulstan.⁴⁵

⁴² Spel. Concil. p. 294.

⁴³ Ibid. 241.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 256.

⁴⁵ Anglia Sacra, vol. ii. p. 259. Our Henry, whose remarks on the dress of our

ancestors are well worth reading, has given a translation of the passage in his History, vol. iv. p. 289.

CHAP. VI.

Their Houses, Furniture, and Luxuries.

IN their ecclesiastical buildings the Anglo-Saxons were expensive and magnificent; their dwelling-houses seem to have been small and inconvenient.¹ Domestic architecture is one of the things that most conspicuously displays and attends the progress of national wealth and taste. The more we recede into the antiquities of every state, we invariably find the habitations of the people ruder and less commodious.

Their furniture we can only know as it happens to be mentioned and sometimes imperfectly described in some of their writings. They may have had many things which we have, but we must conceive of all we find enumerated, that it was heavy, rude, and unworkmanlike. It is in a polished age, and among industrious and wealthy nations, that the mechanical arts attain excellence; and that every convenience of domestic life combines always finished neatness, and frequently elegance and taste, with economy of materials, and utility.

The Anglo-Saxons had many conveniences and luxuries, which men so recently emerging from the barbarian state could not have derived from their own invention. They were indebted for these to their conversion to Christianity. When the Gothic nations exchanged their idolatry for the Christian faith, hierarchies arose in every converted state, which maintained a close and perpetual intercourse with Rome and with each other. From the letters of Pope Gregory, of our Boniface, and many others, we perceive that an intercourse

¹ Strutt has copied a Saxon house from in his sixth plate, from MS. Claud. B. 4. the MS. Cleop. C. 8. in his fig. 3. of may be considered as another specimen of Plate I. The building of the tower of Babel their domestic architecture.

of personal civilities, visits, messages, and presents, was perpetually taking place. Whatever that was rare, curious, or valuable, which one person possessed, he communicated, and not unfrequently gave to his acquaintance. This is very remarkable in the letters of Boniface and his friends,² of whom some were in England, some in France, some in Germany, and elsewhere. The most cordial phrases of urbanity and affection are usually followed by a present of apparel, the aromatic productions of the East, little articles of furniture and domestic comfort, books, and whatever else promised to be acceptable to the person addressed. This reciprocity of liberality, and the perpetual visits which all ranks of the state were in the habit of making to Rome, the seat and centre of all the arts, science, wealth, and industry of the day, occasioned a general diffusion and use of the known conveniences and approved inventions which had then appeared.

Among the furniture of their rooms we find hangings, to be suspended on the walls, most of them silken, some with the figures of golden birds in needlework, some woven, and some plain.³ At another time, a veil or piece of hanging is mentioned, on which was sewed the destruction of Troy.⁴ These were royal presents. We also read of the curtain of a lady, on which was woven the actions of her husband, in memory of his probity.⁵ These articles of manufacture for domestic use are obviously alluded to by Aldhelm in his simile, in which he mentions the texture of hangings or curtains; their being stained with purple and different varieties of colours, and their images, embroidery, and weaving. Their love of gaudy colouring was as apparent in these as in their dress, for he says, "if finished of one colour, uniform, they would not seem beautiful to the eye."⁶ Curtains and hangings are very often mentioned; sometimes in Latin phrases, pallia or cortinas;⁷

² These are in the sixteenth volume of the Magna Bibliotheca Patrum.

³ Ingulf, p. 53.

⁴ Ibid. p. 9.

⁵ 3 Gale Script. 495.

⁶ Aldhelm de Laud. Virg. 283.

⁷ Dugd. 130. 3 Gale, 418 and 495. Ingulf, 53.

sometimes in the Saxon term *wahrift*. Thus *Wynfleda* bequeaths a long *heall wahrift* and a short one, and *Wulfur* bequeaths an *heall wahrifta*; the same testator also leaves a *heall reafes*.⁸ Whether this is another expression for a hanging to the hall, or whether it alludes to any thing like a carpet, the expression itself will not decide. The probability is, that it expresses a part of the hangings. We can perceive the reasons why hangings were used in such early times: their carpenters were not exact and perfect joiners; their buildings were full of crevices, and hangings were therefore rather a necessity than a luxury, as they kept out the wind from the inhabitants. Nothing can more strongly prove their necessity, than that *Alfred*, to preserve his lights from the wind, even in the royal palaces, was obliged to have recourse to lanterns.⁹ Their hangings we find were not cheap enough to be used perpetually, and therefore when the king gave them to the monastery, he adds the injunction to the one gift, that it should be suspended on his anniversary, and to another, that it should be used on festivals.¹⁰

Benches¹¹ and seats, and their coverings, are also mentioned. In one gift, seven *setl hrægel*, or seat coverings,¹² occur. *Wynfleda* bequeaths three *setl hrægl*.¹³ Their footstools appear to have been much ornamented. *Ingulf* mentions two great *pedalia* with lions interwoven, and two smaller ones sprinkled with flowers.¹⁴ Some of their seats or benches represented in the drawings, have animals' heads and legs at their extremities.¹⁵ Their seats seem to have been benches and stools.

Their tables are sometimes very costly: we read of two tables made of silver and gold.¹⁶ *Æthelwold*, in *Edgar's* reign, is said to have made a silver table worth three hundred pounds.¹⁷ We also read of a wooden table for an altar, which

⁸ *Hickes Præf. and Diss. Ep. 54.*
⁹ See vol. i. of this work, p. 306.

¹⁰ *Ingulf, 53.*
¹¹ *Dugd. Mon. 130.*
¹² *Dugd. 216.*
¹³ *Hickes ubi sup.*
¹⁴ *Ing. 53.*
¹⁵ See *Strutt, tab. 10.*
¹⁶ *Dugd. Mon. 40.*
¹⁷ *Ibid. 104.*

was adorned with ample and solid plates of silver, and with gems various in colour and species.¹⁸

Candlesticks of various sorts are mentioned; two large candlesticks of bone (*gebonede candelsticcan*), and six smaller of the same kind, are enumerated,¹⁹ as are also two silver candelabra, gilt,²⁰ and two candelabra well and honourably made.²¹ Bede once mentions that two candles were lighted.²²

Hand-bells also appear. At one time twelve are stated to have been used in a monastery.²³ A disciple of Bede sends to Lullus, in France, "the bell which I have at my hand."²⁴ A silver mirror is also once mentioned.²⁵

Of bed furniture we find in an Anglo-Saxon's will bed-clothes (*beddreafe*), with a curtain (*hryfte*), and sheet (*hoppscytan*), and all that thereto belongs; to his son he gives the bed-reafe and all the clothes that appertain to it.²⁶ An Anglo-Saxon lady gives to one of her children two chests and their contents, her best bed-curtain, linen, and all the clothes belonging to it. To another child she leaves two chests, and "all the bed-clothes that to one bed belong." She also mentions her red tent²⁷ (*giteld*). On another occasion we read of a pillow of straw.²⁸ A goat-skin bed-covering was sent to an Anglo-Saxon abbot.²⁹ In Judith we read of the gilded fly-net hung about the leader's bed.³⁰ Bear-skins are sometimes noticed as if a part of bed furniture. There is a drawing of a Saxon bed and curtain in Claud. B. 4. which may be seen in Strutt, *Horda Angelcynn*. pl. xiii. fig. 2. The head and the bottom of the bed seem to be both boarded, and the pillows look as if made of platted straw. Not to go into a bed, but to lay on the floor, was occasionally enjoined as a penance.³¹

¹⁸ 3 Gale Script. 420.

¹⁹ Dugd. Mon. 221.

²¹ Ibid. 130. *Candelabris ex argento ductilibus*. lb. 104.

²² Bede, 259.

²³ Dugd. Mon. 221.

²⁴ 16 Mag. Bib. 88.

²⁰ Ibid. 40.

²⁵ Dugd. 24.

²⁶ Hickes Diss. Ep. 54.

²⁷ Hickes Præf.

²⁸ 3 Gale Script. 418.

²⁹ 16 Mag. Bib. 52.

³⁰ Frag. Jud.

³¹ Wilk. Leg. Anglo-Sax. p. 97.

For their food and conviviality they used many expensive articles. It was indeed in these that their abundant use of the precious metals principally appeared. We perpetually read of silver cups, and sometimes of silver gilt. Byrhtic, in his will, bequeaths three silver cups.³² Wulfur bequeaths four cups, two of which he describes as of four pounds value.³³ Wynfleda gives, besides four silver cups, a cup with a fringed edge, a wooden cup variegated with gold, a wooden knobbed cup, and two smicere scencing cuppan, or very handsome drinking cups.³⁴ In other places we read of a golden cup, with a gold dish;³⁵ a gold cup of immense weight;³⁶ a dish adorned with gold, and another with Grecian workmanship.³⁷ A lady gave a golden cup, weighing four marks and a half.³⁸ The king of Kent sent to Boniface, the Anglo-Saxon missionary in Germany, a silver bason, gilt within, weighing three pounds and a half.³⁹ On another occasion, a great silver dish of excellent workmanship, and of great value, is noticed.⁴⁰ Two silver cups, weighing twelve marks, were used by the monks in a refectory, to serve their drink.⁴¹ Two silver basons were given by a lady to a monastery.⁴² A king, in 833, gave his gilt cup, engraved without with vine-dressers fighting dragons, which he called his cross-bowl, because it had a cross marked within, and it had four angles projecting like a similar figure;⁴³ two silver cups, with covers, in one place;⁴⁴ five silver cups in another;⁴⁵ and such-like notices, sufficiently prove to us that the rich and great among the Anglo-Saxons had no want of plate. At other times we meet with cups of bone,⁴⁶ brazen dishes,⁴⁷ and a coffer made of bones.⁴⁸ We may infer that the less affluent used vessels of

³² Thorp. Reg. Roff. 30.

³³ Hicke Diss. Ep. 54.

³⁴ Hicke Præf. p. 22.

³⁵ Dugd. Mon. 21.

³⁶ Ibid. 104.

³⁷ Ibid. 40. ³⁸ Ibid. 240.

³⁹ 16 Mag. Bib. p. 64.

⁴⁰ Dugd. 123.

⁴¹ 3 Gale Script. 406.

⁴² Ibid. 418.

⁴³ Ingulf, p. 9.

⁴⁴ Dugd. 40.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 221.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Bede, lib. ii. c. 16.

⁴⁸ 16 Mag. Bib. 93.

wood and horn. A council ordered that no cup or dish made of horn should be used in the sacred offices.⁴⁹

Horns were much used at table. Two buffalo horns are in Wynfleda's will.⁵⁰ Four horns are noticed in the list of a monastery's effects.⁵¹ Three horns worked with gold and silver occur;⁵² and the Mercian king gave to Croyland monastery the horn of his table, "that the elder monks may drink there—out on festivals, and in their benedictions remember sometimes the soul of the donor, Witlaf."⁵³ The curiously carved horn which is still preserved in York cathedral was made in the Anglo-Saxon times, and deserves the notice of the inquisitive, for its magnitude and workmanship.

Glass vessels, which are among the most valuable of our present comforts, were little used in the time of Bede and Boniface. A disciple of Bede asked Lullus, in France, if there were any man in his parish who could make glass vessels well; if such a man lived there, he desired that he might be persuaded to come to England, because, adds he, "we are ignorant and helpless in this art."⁵⁴ Bede mentions lamps of glass, and vessels for many uses.⁵⁵ Glass became more used in the conveniences of domestic life towards the period of the Norman conquest.

Gold and silver were also applied to adorn their sword hilts, their saddles and bridles, and their banners.⁵⁶ Their gold rings contained gems; and even their garments, saddles, and bridles, were sometimes jewelled.⁵⁷

The presents which the father of Alfred took with him to Rome deserve enumeration, from their value, and because they shew the supply of the precious metals which the Anglo-Saxons possessed; we derive the knowledge of them from Anastasius, a contemporary: a crown of the purest gold, weighing four pounds; two basons of the purest gold, weigh-

⁴⁹ Spelm. Conc. 295. ⁵⁰ Hickes Præf.

⁵¹ Dugd. 221.

⁵² Ibid. 40.

⁵³ Ingulf, 9.

⁵⁴ 16 Mag. Bib. 88.

⁵⁵ Bede, p. 295.

⁵⁶ Dugd. Mon. 266. ib. 24. Bede, 3. 11.

⁵⁷ Aldhelm de Laud. Virg. 307. Eddius, 60. 62. 3 Gale Script. 494. Dugd. Mon. 24.

ing * * * * * pounds; a sword, bound with purest gold; two small images of the purest gold; four dishes of silver gilt; two palls of silk, with golden clasps; with other silk dresses, and gold clasps, and hangings. To the bishops, priests, deacons, and other clergy, and to the great at Rome, he distributed gold, and among the people small silver.⁵⁸

A few years afterwards, we learn from the same author, that the English then at Rome presented to the oratory in the pontifical palace, at Frescati, a silver table weighing several pounds.⁵⁹ In the age before this, we read of gold and silver vessels sent presents to Rome.⁶⁰

Gold and silver rods, or crosses and crucifixes, are frequently mentioned;⁶¹ also a silver graphium, or pen.⁶² The crown of the Anglo-Saxon kings is described by the contemporary biographer of Dunstan as made of gold and silver, and set with various gems.⁶³ They used iron very commonly, and often tin.

The Anglo-Saxons seem to have been acquainted with the precious stones. In the MSS. Tib. A. 3. twelve sorts of them are thus described: "The first gem kind is black and green, which are both mingled together, and this is called giaspis. The other is saphyrus; this is like the sun, and in it appear like golden stars. The third is calcedonius; this is like a burning candle. Smaragdus is very green. Sardonix is likest blood. Onichinus is brown and yellow. Sardius is like clear blood. Berillus is like water. Crisoprassus is like a green leek, and green stars seem to shine from it. Topazius is like gold; and carbunculus is like burning fire."

The odoriferous productions of India and the East were known to our ancestors, and highly valued. They frequently formed part of their presents. Boniface sent to an abbess a

⁵⁸ Anastasius Bibliot. de Vit. Pontif. p. 403. ed. Rom. 1718.

⁵⁹ Ibid. 418.

⁶⁰ Beale, iv. c. i.

⁶¹ Wulf. Will ap. Hickes Diss. Ep. 54. Ingulf, 9. Dugd. 233.

⁶² Mag. Bib. xvi. p. 51.

⁶³ MS. Cleop. B. 13.

little frankincense, pepper, and cinnamon,⁶⁴ to another person some storax and cinnamon.⁶⁵ So he received from an archdeacon, cinnamon, pepper, and costus.⁶⁶ A deacon at Rome once sent him four ounces of cinnamon, two ounces of costus, two pounds of pepper, and one pound of cozombri.⁶⁷

The Anglo-Saxons used the luxury of hot baths. Their use seems to have been common; for a nun is mentioned, who, as an act of voluntary mortification, washed in them only on festivals.⁶⁸ Not to go to warm baths, nor to a soft bed, was part of a severe penitence.⁶⁹ The general practice of this kind of bath may be also inferred, from its being urged by the canons, as a charitable duty, to give to the poor meat, mund, fire, fodder, bed, bathing, and clothes.⁷⁰ But while warm bathing was in this use and estimation, we find cold bathing so little valued as to be mentioned as a penitentiary punishment.⁷¹

The washing of the feet in warm water, especially after travelling, is often mentioned.⁷² It was a part of indispensable hospitality to offer this refreshment to a visitor; and this politeness will lead us to suppose, that shoes and stockings, though worn in social life, were little used in travelling. The custom of walking without these coverings in the country, and of putting them on when the traveller approached towns, has existed among the commonalty in North Britain even in the present reign. Among the gifts of Boniface to an Anglo-Saxon prelate, was a shaggy or woolly present, to dry the feet after being washed.⁷³ To wash the feet of the poor was one of the acts of penance to be performed by the rich.⁷⁴

⁶⁴ Mag. Bib. xvi. p. 50.

⁶⁵ Ibid. 51.

⁶⁶ Ibid. 119.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 120. Costus, a kind of shrub growing in Arabia and Persia, and having a root of a pleasant spicy smell.

⁶⁸ Bede, iv. c. 19.

⁶⁹ Wilk. Leg. Anglo-Sax. p. 94.

⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 95. ⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Bede, 234. 251. 257.

⁷³ 16 Mag. Bib. 52. & ib.

⁷⁴ Wilk. Leg. Anglo-Sax. 97.

CHAP. VII.

Their Conviviality and Amusements.

IN the ruder states of society, melancholy is the prevailing feature of the mind; the stern or dismal countenances of savages are every where remarkable. Usually the prey of want or passion, they are seldom cheerful till they can riot in excess. Their mirth is then violent and transient; and they soon relapse into their habitual gloom.

CHAP.
VII.

As the agricultural state advances, and the comforts of civilization accumulate, provident industry secures regular supplies; the removal of want diminishes care, and introduces leisure; the softer affections then appear with increasing fervour; the human temper is rendered milder; mirth and joy become habitual; mankind are delighted to indulge their social feelings, and a large portion of time is devoted to amusement.

The Anglo-Saxons were in this happy state of social improvement; they loved the pleasures of the table, but they had the wisdom to unite with them more intellectual diversions. At their cheerful meetings it was the practice for all to sing in turn; and Bede mentions an instance in which, for this purpose, the harp was sent round.¹ The musicians of the day, the wild flowers of their poetry, and the ludicrous jokes and tricks of their buffas, were such essential additions to their conviviality, that the council of Cloveshoe, which thought that more solemn manners were better suited to the ecclesiastic, forbade the monks to suffer their mansions to be the receptacle of the "sportive arts, that is, of poets, harpers, musicians, and buffoons."² A previous council, aiming to produce the same effect, had decreed, that no ecclesiastic

¹ Bede, lib. iv. p. 170.

² Spal. Concil. 256.

should have harpers, or any music, nor should permit any jokes or plays in their presence.³ In Edgar's speech on the expulsion of the clergy, the histriones, or gleemen, are noticed as frequenting the monasteries: "There are the dice, there are dancing and singing, even to the very middle of the night."⁴ Among the canons made in the same king's reign, a priest was forbidden to be an eala-scop, or an ale poet, or to any wise gliwige, or play the gleeman with himself, or with others.⁵ Strutt has given some drawings of the Saxon gleeman from some ancient MSS. I will add his description of the figures.⁶ "We there see a man throwing three balls and three knives alternately into the air, and catching them one by one as they fall, but returning them again in rotation. To give the greater appearance of difficulty to this part, it is accompanied with the music of an instrument resembling the modern violin. It is necessary to add, that these two figures, as well as those dancing, previously mentioned, form a part only of two larger paintings, which, in their original state, are placed as frontispieces to the Psalms of David; in both, the artists have represented that monarch seated upon his throne, in the act of playing upon the harp or lyre, and surrounded by the masters of sacred music. In addition to the four figures upon the middle of the plate, and exclusive of the king, there are four more, all of them instrumental performers; one playing upon the horn, another upon the trumpet, and the other two upon a kind of tabor or drum, which, however, is beaten with a single drum-stick. The manuscript in which this illumination is preserved, was written as early as the eighth century. The second painting, which is more modern than the former by two full centuries, contains four figures besides the royal psalmist: the two not engraved

³ Spel. Concil. 159.⁴ Ethel. Ab. Riev. p. 360.⁵ Spel. Concil. 455.⁶ Strutt's Sports and Pastimes, 132, 133. This book was the last publication of this worthy and industrious man.

“ are musicians; the one is blowing a long trumpet, sup-
 “ ported by a staff he holds in his left hand, and the other is
 “ winding a crooked horn. In a short prologue immediately
 “ preceding the Psalms, we read as follows: David, filius
 “ Jesse, in regno suo quatuor elegit qui Psalmos fecerunt, id
 “ est Asaph, Æman, Æthan, et Iduthan; which may be thus
 “ translated literally: David, the son of Jesse, in his reign,
 “ elected four persons who composed psalms, that is to say,
 “ Asaph, Æman, Æthan, and Iduthan. In the painting these
 “ four names are separately appropriated, one to each of the
 “ four personages there represented. The player upon the
 “ violin is called Iduthan, and Æthan is tossing up the knives
 “ and balls.”⁷

Another passage may be cited from the same industrious
 and worthy author.

“ One part of the gleeman’s profession, as early as the
 “ tenth century, was teaching animals to dance, to tumble,
 “ and to put themselves into variety of attitudes at the com-
 “ mand of their masters. Upon the twenty-second plate we
 “ see the curious though rude delineation, being little more
 “ than an outline, which exhibits a specimen of this pastime.
 “ The principal jocolator appears in the front, holding a
 “ knotted switch in one hand, and a line attached to the bear
 “ in the other; the animal is lying down in obedience to his
 “ command; and behind them are two more figures, the
 “ one playing upon two flutes or flageolets, and elevating
 “ his left leg while he stands upon his right, supported by
 “ a staff that passes under his arm-pit; the other dancing.
 “ This performance takes place upon an eminence resembling
 “ a stage, made with earth; and in the original a vast con-
 “ course are standing round it in a semicircle as spectators
 “ of the sport, but they are so exceedingly ill drawn, and
 “ withal so indistinct, that I did not think it worth the pains
 “ to copy them. The dancing, if I may so call it, of the

⁷ Strutt’s Sports and Pastimes, p. 134.

“ flute-player is repeated twice in the same manuscript. I
 “ have thence selected two other figures, and placed them
 “ upon the seventeenth plate, where we see a youth playing
 “ upon a harp with only four strings, and apparently singing
 “ at the same time, while an elderly man is performing the
 “ part of a buffoon, or posture-master, holding up one of his
 “ legs, and hopping upon the other to the music.”⁸

In a Latin MS. of Prudentius, with Saxon notes, there is a drawing which seems to represent a sort of military dance exhibited for public amusement: “ Two men equipped in
 “ martial habits, and each of them armed with a sword and
 “ shield, are engaged in a combat; the performance is en-
 “ livened by the sound of a horn; the musician acts in a
 “ double capacity, and is, together with a female assistant,
 “ dancing round them to the cadence of the music, and
 “ probably the actions of the combatants were also regulated
 “ by the same measure.”⁹

We may remark, that the word commonly used in Anglo-Saxon to express dancing, is the verb *tumbian*: The Anglo-Saxon version of the gospels mentions that the daughter of Herodias *tumbude* before Herod; and the Anglo-Saxon word for dancer is *tumbere*. It is probable that their mode of dancing included much tumbling.

We may infer that bear-baiting was an amusement of some importance to our ancestors, as it is stated in *Doomsday-book*, among the annual payments from Norwich, that it should provide one bear, and six dogs for the bear.

It was in the character of a gleeman, or, as it was expressed in the Latin term, *joculator*, that Alfred visited the Danish encampment. That these persons were not only valued, but

⁸ Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes*, p. 134. “ preserved in the Harleian library, and
 He adds in a note, that “ both these draw- “ marked 603.” His twenty-second plate is in
 “ ings occur in a MS. Psalter, written in the 182d page of his work; his seventeenth
 “ Latin, and apparently about the middle plate in p. 132, to which we refer the reader.
 “ of the tenth century. It contains many
 “ drawings, all of them exceedingly rude, ⁹ Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes*, p. 166.
 “ and most of them merely outlines. It is His plate of it is p. 162. The MS. is in the
 Cotton-Lib. Cleop. C. 8.

well rewarded in their day, we learn from a curious fact: Edmund, the son of Ethelred, gave a villa to his gleeman, or jocular, whose name was Hifard. This gleeman, in the decline of life, went on a visit of devotion to Rome, and previous to his journey gave the land to the church at Canterbury.¹⁰ In Doomsday-book, Berdic, a jocular of the king, is stated to have possessed three villas in Gloucestershire.

The Anglo-Saxons used a game at hazard, which they called tæfl. The tæfl-stan, or tæfl-stone, was the die. The canons of Edgar forbid priests to be tæflere, or players at the tæfl.¹¹ There is a passage which may be noticed on this subject, concerning Canute: A bishop having made a lucrative bargain with a drunken Dane, rode in the night to the king to borrow money to fulfil his contract: it says, "he found the king alleviating the tedium of a long night by the play of tesserarum, or scaccorum;"¹² he was successful in his application. Whether this play was the tæfl, or any other game more resembling chess, is not clear.

One of their principal diversions was hunting. This is frequently mentioned. A king is exhibited by Bede as standing at the fire with his attendants, and warming himself after hunting.¹³ Alfred is praised by his friend Asser for his incomparable skill and assiduity in the arts of the chase.¹⁴ He is stated to have gone as far as Cornwall to enjoy it.¹⁵ The hunt of Edmund, the grandson of Alfred, at Ceoddri, is thus described by a contemporary: "When they reached the woods, they took various directions among the woody avenues; and lo, from the varied noise of the horns and the barking of the dogs, many stags began to fly about. From these, the king, with his pack of hounds, selected one for his own hunting, and pursued it long through devious ways with great agility."

¹⁰ Dugdale Mon. p. 21.

¹¹ Spelm. Concil. p. 455.

¹² Hist. Rames. 3 Gale, p. 442.

¹³ Bede, iii. 14.

¹⁴ Asser, p. 16.

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 40.

“ on his horse, and with the dogs following. In the vicinity
 “ of Ceoddri were several abrupt and lofty precipices hang-
 “ ing over profound declivities. To one of these the stag
 “ came in his flight, and dashed himself down the immense
 “ depth with headlong ruin, all the dogs following and pe-
 “ rishing with him. The king, pursuing the animal and the
 “ hounds with equal energy, was rushing onwards to the
 “ precipice; he saw his danger, and struggled violently to
 “ stop his courser; the horse disobeyed awhile his rein: he
 “ gave up the hope of life, he recommended himself to God
 “ and his saint, and was carried to the very brink of
 “ destruction before the speed of the animal could be checked.
 “ The horse's feet were trembling on the last turf of the
 “ precipice, when he stopped.”¹⁶

In the Saxon dialogues above mentioned, we have this con-
 versation on hunting: “ I am a hunter to one of the kings.”
 ‘ How do you exercise your art?’ “ I spread my nets, and set
 them in a fit place, and instruct my hounds to pursue the wild
 deer till they come to the nets unexpectedly, and so are entan-
 gled, and I slay them in the nets.” ‘ Cannot you hunt with-
 out nets?’ “ Yes, with swift hounds I follow the wild deer.”
 ‘ What wild deer do you chiefly take?’ “ Harts, boars, and
 rein-deer (rana), and goats, and sometimes hares.” ‘ Did
 you hunt to-day?’ “ No, because it was Sunday, but yester-
 day I did. I took two harts and one boar.” ‘ How?’ “ The
 harts in nets, the boar I slew.” ‘ How dared you slay him?’
 “ The hounds drove him to me, and I, standing opposite,
 pierced him.” ‘ You was bold.’ “ A hunter should not be
 fearful, because various wild deer live in the woods.” ‘ What
 do you do with your hunting?’ “ I give the king what I take,
 because I am his huntsman.” ‘ What does he give thee?’
 “ He clothes me well, and feeds me, and sometimes gives
 me a horse or a bracelet, that I may follow my art more
 lustily.”

¹⁶ Life of Dunstan. Cott. MSS. Cleop. B. 13.

We have a little information about the royal hunting in Doomsday-book. When the king went to Shrewsbury to hunt, the most respectable burghers who had horses, served as his guard, with arms; and the sheriff sent thirty-six men on foot, to be stationed at the hunt while the king was there. In Hereford, every house sent a man, to be stationed in the wood whenever the king hunted.

Among the drawings in the Saxon calendar in the Cotton library, Tib. B. 5, the month of September represents a boar-hunt: a wood appears, containing boars; a man is on foot with a spear, another appears with a horn slung and applied to his mouth; he has also a spear, and dogs are following.

Hunting was forbidden by Canute on a Sunday.¹⁷ Every man was allowed to hunt in the woods, and in the fields that were his own, but not to interfere with the king's hunting.¹⁸

Hawks and falcons were also favourite subjects of amusement, and valuable presents in those days, when, the country being much over-run with wood, all species of the feathered race must have abounded. A king of Kent begged of a friend abroad two falcons of such skill and courage as to attack cranes willingly, and, seizing them, to throw them to the ground. He says, he makes this request because there were few hawks of that kind in Kent who produced good offspring, and who could be made agile and courageous enough in this art of warfare.¹⁹ Our Boniface sent, among some other presents, a hawk and two falcons to a friend;²⁰ and we may infer the common use of the diversion from his forbidding his monks to hunt in the woods with dogs, and from having hawks and falcons.²¹ An Anglo-Saxon, by his will, gives two hawks (hafocas), and all his stag-hounds (heador hundas), to his natural lord.²² The sportsmen in the train of the great were so onerous on lands, as to make the exemption of their visit

¹⁷ Wilkin's Leg. Sax. 130.

¹⁸ Ibid. 146.

¹⁹ Mag. Bib. xvi. p. 65.

²⁰ Mag. Bib. xvi. p. 53.

²¹ Ib. p. 94.

²² Thorpe's Reg. Roff. p. 24.

a valuable privilege. Hence a king liberates some lands from those who carry with them hawks or falcons, horses or dogs.²³ The Saxon calendar, in its drawings, represents hawking in the month of October.

Hunting and hawking were for many ages favourite diversions in this island. In the tapestry of Bayeux, Harold appears with his hawk upon his hand. Ethelstan made North Wales furnish him with as many dogs as he chose, "whose scent-pursuing noses might explore the haunts and coverts of the deer;" and he also exacted birds, "who knew how to hunt others along the atmosphere."²⁴ A nobleman is mentioned, who frequented his estates near woods and marshes, because it was convenient for hunting and hawking.²⁵ This was the fashion of the times; and even the meek and impassive Edward the Confessor is exhibited as pursuing his deer when he was thwarted by a rustic whom he desired to punish, but that his simple mind knew not that he had the power.²⁶ The chief delights of this king were, the coursing of swift hounds, whose clamour during the sport he was eager to cheer, and the flights of birds whose nature it is to pursue their kindred prey. Every day, after his morning devotions, he indulged in these exercises.²⁷

The Saxon dialogues thus speak of the fowler: 'How do you deceive fowls?' "Many ways; sometimes with nets, sometimes with gins, sometimes with lime, sometimes whistling, sometimes with hawks, sometimes with traps." 'Have you a hawk?' "I have." 'Can you tame them?' "I can; what use would they be to me, if I could not tame them?" 'Give me a hawk.' "I will give it willingly, if you will give me a swift hound; which hawk will you have, the greater or the less?" 'The greater; how do you feed them?' "They feed themselves and me in winter, and in spring I let them fly

²³ Cott. MS. Claud. C. 9. p. 104.

²⁴ Malmsb. lib. ii. p. 50.

²⁵ Hist. Ram. 3 Gale Scrip. p. 404.

²⁶ Malmsb. lib. ii. c. 13. p. 79.

²⁷ Ibid p. 91.

to the woods. I take for myself young ones in harvest, and tame them." "And why do you let them fly from you when tamed?" "Because I will not feed them in summer, as they eat too much." "But many feed and keep them tame through the summer, that they may again have them ready." "So they do, but I will not have that trouble about them, as I can take many others."²⁸

²⁸ Cotton MS. Tib. A. 3.

C H A P. VIII.

*Their Marriages.*BOOK
VIII.

IT is well known that the female sex were much more highly valued, and more respectfully treated, by the barbarous Gothic nations, than by the more polished states of the East. Among the Anglo Saxons they occupied the same important and independent rank in society which they now enjoy. They were allowed to possess, to inherit, and to transmit landed property; they shared in all the social festivities; they were present at the Witena Gemot and the Shire Gemot; they were permitted to sue and be sued in the courts of justice; their persons, their safety, their liberty, and their property, were protected by express laws; and they possessed all that sweet influence which, while the human heart is responsive to the touch of love, they will ever retain in those countries which have the wisdom and the urbanity to treat them as equal, intelligent, and independent beings.

The earliest institutions respecting the Anglo-Saxon marriages occur in the laws of Ethelbert. According to these, a man might purchase a woman, if the agreement was made without fraud; but if deceit was detected, she was to be taken back to her house, and his money was to be restored to him. It was also enjoined, that if a wife brought forth children alive, and survived her husband, she was to have half his property. She was allowed the same privilege, if she chose, to live with her children; but if she was childless, his paternal relations were to have his possessions, and the morgen gift.*

The customary forms attendant upon their marriage contracts are more clearly displayed to us in the laws of

* Wilk. Leg. Sax. p. 7.

Edmund: the consent of the lady and her friends was to be first obtained; the bridegroom² was then to give his promise and his pledge, to the person who spoke for her, that he desired her, that he might keep her, according to the law of God, as a man ought to keep his wife. Nor was this promise trusted to his own honour or interest: the female sex were so much under the protection of the law, that the bridegroom was compelled to produce friends who gave their security for his due observance of his covenant.

The parties being thus betrothed, the next step was to settle to whom the foster lean, the money requisite for the nourishing the children, should be applied. The bridegroom was then required to pledge himself to this, and his friends became responsible for him.

This matter being arranged, he was then to signify what he meant to give her for choosing to be his wife, and what he should give her in case she survived him. I consider the first gift to be a designation of his intended morgen gift. This was the present which the Anglo-Saxon wives received from their husbands on the day after their nuptials, as it is expressed in the law. It seems to have been intended as a compliment to the ladies for honouring a suitor with their preference, and for submitting to the duties of wedlock. The law adds, that, if it be so agreed, it is right that she should halve the property, or have the whole if they had children together, unless she chose again another husband. This was an improvement on the ancient law, which, in the event of no issue, had directed the morgen gift to be returned.

The bridegroom was then required to confirm with his pledge all that he had promised, and his friends were to become responsible for its due performance.

² The Saxon word is bryd-guma. Guma means a man, which we have perverted into groom; bryd implies marriage. The Welsh for marriage is priodas; priodvab is a bridegroom; priodi to marry; all these in composition change into an initial b. No

one can suspect that such a term as this can by either nation have been derived from the other. But the Welsh has preserved the rationale of the word, which implies appropriation, or proprietorship.

These preliminaries being settled, they proceeded to the marriage. Her relations then took and wedded her to wife, and to a right life, with him who desired her; and the person appointed to keep the pledges that had been given, took the security for them. For the more complete assurance of the lady's personal safety and comfort, in those days wherein a multiplicity of jurisdictions gave often impunity to crime, the friends who took the pledges were authorized to become guarantee to her, that if her husband carried her into another thane's land, he would do her no injury; and that if she did wrong, they would be ready to answer the compensation, if she had nothing from which she could pay it.

The law proceeds to direct, that the mass-priest should be present at the marriage, and should consecrate their union with the divine blessing to every happiness and prosperity.³ There is an article in one of the collections of ecclesiastical canons, "How man shall bless the bridegroom and the bride."⁴

The Anglo-Saxon remains will furnish us with some illustrations of the pecuniary contracts which attended their marriages. We will give one document at length, as it may be called an Anglo-Saxon lady's marriage-settlement.

"There appears in this writing the compact which Wulfric
"and the archbishop made when he obtained the archbishop's
"sister for his wife. It is, that he promised her the land
"at Ealretune and at Rebbedforda for her life, and promised
"her the land at Cnihte-wica; that he would obtain it for her
"for the lives of three men from the monastery at Wincel-
"cumbe; and he gave her the land at Eanulfin-tune to give
"and to grant to those that were dearest to her during life,
"and after her life to those that were dearest to her; and
"he promised her fifty mances of gold, and thirty men
"and thirty horses. Now of this were to witness Wulfstan

³ Wilk. Leg. Sax. p. 75, 76.

⁴ MS. CCC. Cantab. S. xii. c. 71.

“ the archbishop, and Leofwin the ealdorman, and Æthelstan
“ bishop, and Ælford abbot, and Briteh monk, and many
“ good men in addition to them, both ecclesiastics and lay-
“ men, that this compact was thus made. Now of this com-
“ pact there are two writings; one with the archbishop at
“ Wigere ceaster, and another with Æthelstan, the bishop at
“ Herford.”⁵

Without deviating into an exposition of the customs of other nations as to the morgen gift,⁶ we will state a few circumstances concerning it from our own documents. It is frequently mentioned in ladies' wills: thus Wynfleda, bequeathing some land at Faccancumb, calls it her morgen gifu.⁷ So Elfleda, in her will, says, “ Rettendun that was my morgen
“ gyfu;”⁸ and Elfhelm, in his will, has this passage: “ And
“ I declare what I gave to my wife for her morgen give; that
“ is, Beadewan, and Burge stede, and Strætford, and the
“ three hides at Hean-healem.” The same testator notices an additional present that he had made his wife on her nuptials: “ And I gave to her when we two first came together,
“ the two hides at Wilburgeham, and at Hrægenan, and that
“ thereto lieth.”⁹ The morgen gift was therefore a settlement on the lady very similar to a modern jointure. It was bargained for before marriage, but was not actually vested in the wife till afterwards. Our conception of the thing will be probably simplified and assisted by recollecting the language of our modern settlements. The land or property conveyed by them is given in trust for the person who grants it “ until the
“ said marriage shall take effect; and from and immediately
“ after the solemnization thereof,” it is then granted to the uses agreed upon. So the morgen gift was settled before the

⁵ This may be seen in Wanley's Catalogue, p. 302, and Hickes's Diss. Ep. 76. Wulstan died 1023.

⁶ Henry's observations on the marriage of our ancestors are very discursive, and relate rather to other nations than to the Anglo-Saxons. See his vol. iii. p. 393, &c.

The reader of Henry will frequently have occasion to recollect this.

⁷ See her will. Hickes's Pref. xxii.

⁸ See Lye, Sax. Dict. voc. morgen gife.

⁹ See his will at length, from Mr. Astle's collection, in the second appendix to the Saxon Dictionary.

nuptials, but was not actually given away until the morning afterwards, or until the marriage was completed.

Nothing could be more calculated to produce a very striking dissimilarity, between the Gothic nations and the Oriental states, than this exaltation of the female sex to that honour, consequence, and independence, which European laws studied to uphold. As the education of youth will always rest principally with women, in the most ductile part of life, it is of the greatest importance that the fair sex should possess high estimation in society; and nothing could more certainly tend to perpetuate this feeling, than the privilege of possessing property in their own right, and at their own disposal.

That the Anglo-Saxon ladies both inherited and disposed of property as they pleased, appears from many instances: a wife is mentioned who devised land by her will, with the consent of her husband, in his lifetime.¹⁰ We read also of land which a wife had sold in her husband's life.¹¹ We frequently find wives the parties to a sale of land;¹² and still oftener we read of estates given to women, or devised by men of affluence to their wives.¹³ Widows selling property is also a common occurrence;¹⁴ so is the incident of women devising it.¹⁵ That they inherited land is also clear, for a case is mentioned wherein, there being no male heir, the estate went to a female.¹⁶ Women appear as tenants in capite in Domesday.

There are many instances of land being granted to both husband and wife.¹⁷ The queens frequently join in the charters with the kings;¹⁸ and it is once mentioned, that a widow and the heirs were sued for her husband's debts.¹⁹ Indeed, the instances of women having property transferred to them,

¹⁰ Hist. Ram. 3 Gale, 460.

¹¹ Ibid. 466. ¹² Ibid. 472. 474. 475. 408.

¹³ 3 Gale, 441. 407, 408; and see the wills of Ælfred Dux, and of Elfhelm, in Sax. Dict. App. 2. and several Saxon grants.

¹⁴ 3 Gale, 468.

¹⁵ Ibid. 471. See the charta of Eadgifa

in Sax. Dict. App. and of Wynfleda ap. Hicces.

¹⁶ Ingulf, p. 39.

¹⁷ As in Claud. B. 6. p. 38. So Offa gives land to his minister and his sister. Astle, No. 7. ib. 8.

¹⁸ Astle's Charters, 48; and Heming, p. 9, &c. ¹⁹ 3 Gale, 468.

and also of their transmitting it to others, surround us on all sides. To name only a few: a king's mother gave five hides to a noble matron, which she gave to a monastery.²⁰ When a bishop had bought some lands of an husband and a wife, he fixed a day when she should come and surrender them, because she had the greater right to the land by a former husband.²¹ A mother bequeathed property to two of her daughters; and to her third daughter, Leosware, she gave an estate at Weddringesete, on the reproachful condition, that she should keep herself chaste, or marry, that she and her progeny might not be branded with the infamy of the contagion of prostitution.²²

In the oldest Anglo-Saxon law, widows were protected by an express regulation. Four ranks are mentioned: an eorlcund's widow, another sort, a third and fourth sort. Their tranquillity invaded was to be punished by fines adapted to their quality, as fifty shillings, twenty, twelve, and six shillings.²³

They were also guarded from personal violence. If any took a widow without her consent, he was to be fined a double mulct.²⁴ It was also expressly forbidden to any one to marry a woman if she was unwilling.²⁵

The morgen gift was not left optional to the husband to give or withhold after the marriage. One of the laws of Ina expressly provide, that if a man bargained for a woman, and the gyft was not duly forthcoming, he should actually pay the money, and also a penalty and a compensation to her sureties for breaking his troth.²⁶ The morgen gift was also the means by which they punished widows who married too early. Twelve months was the legal term prescribed for widowhood. By Ethelred's law, every widow who kept her-

²⁰ 3 Gale, 481.

²¹ Ibid. 472.

²³ Wilk. Leg. Sax. 7.

²² Ibid. 507. So Alfred in his will gives estates to his three daughters, and also money.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid. 145.

²⁶ Ibid. 20.

self in the peace of God and of the king, and who remained twelve months without a husband, might choose afterwards as she pleased.²⁷ But by a subsequent law, if she married within the year, she lost her morgen gift, and all the property which she derived from her first husband.²⁸

These pecuniary bargains which were made on the Anglo-Saxon marriages do not breathe much of the spirit of affectionate romance. The men, however, cannot be called mercenary suitors, as they appear to have been the pay-masters. These contracts give occasion to the Saxon legislators to express the fact of treating for a marriage by the terms of buying a wife. Hence our oldest law says, if a man buys a maiden, the bargain shall stand if there be no deceit; otherwise, she should be restored to her home, and his money should be returned to him.²⁹ So, in the penalty before mentioned annexed to the nonpayment of the morgen gift, the expression used is, if a man buys a wife.³⁰ In this kind of marriage-bargains it was a necessary protection extended to the lover, that the same law which forbade the compelling a woman to marry the man she disliked, also, as an impartial counterpart of justice, directed that a man should not be forced to give his money, unless he was desirous to bestow it of his own free will.³¹ There is another passage which tends to express, that marriage was considered as the purchase of the lady. "If a freeman lays with the wife of a freeman, he must pay the were, and obtain another woman with his own money, and lead her to the other."³² In this point we have greatly improved on the customs, or at least the language of our ancestors. Pecuniary considerations and arrangements are still important formulas preceding marriages; but ladies frequently bring their husband property, instead of receiving it; and if they do not, their affection and

²⁷ Wilk. Leg. Sax. 109. 122.

²⁸ Ibid. 145.

²⁹ Ibid. 7.

³⁰ Wilk. Leg. Sax. 19.

³¹ Ibid. 145.

³² Ibid. 4.

attentions are his dearest treasure. They are not now either bought or sold, unless where interest counterfeits affection.

After adding that marriages were forbidden within certain degrees of consanguinity,³³ we have only the unpleasing task remaining of mentioning the penalties which were attached to the violation of female chastity.

If a slave committed a rape on a female slave, he was punished with a corporal mutilation. If any one compelled an immature maiden, he was to abide the same punishment. Whoever violated a ceorl's wife, was to pay him five shillings, and be fined sixty shillings.³⁴

For adultery with the wife of a twelve hundred man, the offender was to pay one hundred and twenty shillings; and one hundred shillings for the wife of a six hundred man, and forty shillings for a ceorl's wife. This might be paid in live property, and no man might sell another for it. For the degrees of intimacy with a ceorl's wife, which are specified, various fines were exacted.³⁵

The earliest Saxon laws were attentive to this vice: in those of Ethelred fifty shillings were the appointed penalty for intimacy with the king's maiden, half that sum with his grinding servant, and twelve shillings with another, or with an earl's cup-bearer. The chastity of a ceorl's attendant was guarded by six shillings, and of inferior servants by the diminished penalty of fifty and thirty scættas.³⁶

By the same laws, for a rape on a servile woman, the offender was to pay her owner fifty shillings, and then to buy her at the will of her owner. If she was pregnant, he was to pay thirty-five shillings, and fifteen shillings to the king, and twenty shillings if betrothed to another.³⁷

³³ Wilk. Leg. Sax. 52, 129.

³⁴ Ibid. 40.

³⁵ Ibid. 37.

³⁶ Wilk. Leg. Sax. p. 2.

³⁷ Ibid. p. 7.

C H A P. IX.

*Classes and Condition of Society.*BOOK
VIII.Dignity by
birth;

EVERY man in the Anglo-Saxon society beneath the cyning and his family was in one of these classes. He was either in high estimation from his birth; or he was in a state of dignity from office, or from property; or he was a free-man; or a freed-man; or he was in one of the servile classes.

There was certainly a personal distinction arising from birth. Individuals are described in these times as noble by descent.¹ The expression ethelboren, or noble born, occurs several times, even in the laws.² A very forcible passage on this subject appears in the life of St. Guthlac: "There was a noble (ethela) man in the high nation of the Mercians; he was of the oldest race, and the noblest (æthelstan) that was named Iclingas."³ The sense of this cannot be mistaken: a family is expressly distinguished from the rest by an appropriated name "Iclingas." We may recollect here that Iornandes says of the Goths, that they had a noble race called the Balthæ, from whence Alaric sprung.⁴ In the canons of Edgar another decisive passage attests, that superiority of birth was felt to convey superior consequence; for it was found necessary to require, "that no forth-boren priest despise one that is less born, because, if men think rightly, all men are of one origin."⁵ No peculiar titles, as with us, seem to have distinguished the nobly born; they were rather marked out to their fellows by that name of the family which had become illustrious, as the Fabii and Cornelii of the Romans. Their title was formed by the addition of ing to the name of the ancestor whose fame produced their

¹ 3 Gale Script. 395. 417, 418.² MS. Vesp. D. 14. p. 36. 120. and Wilk. Leg. Sax. 37.³ MS. Vesp. D. 21. p. 19.⁴ See vol. i. of this work, p. 67.⁵ Wilk. Leg. Sax. 83.

glory. Thus from Uffa his posterity was called Uffingas.⁶ So Beowulf, the hero of an Anglo-Saxon poem, was one of the Scyldingas.

CHAP.
IX.

Beowulf was illustrious;
The fruit wide sprang
Of the posterity of the Scylde.

Then was in the burghs
Beowulf, the Scyldinga,
The dear king of his people.

With them the Scyld
Departed to the ship,
While many were prone to go
In the path of their lord.
They him then bore
To the journey of the ocean
As his companions,
He himself commanded;
Whence with words he governed
The Scyldinga of battle.⁷

The birth that was thought illustrious conferred personal honour, but no political rank or power. No title was attached to it which descended by heirship and gave a perpetuity of political privileges. That was a later improvement. In theoretical reasoning, and in the eye of religion, the distinction of birth seems to be an unjust prejudice; we have all one common ancestor, and the same Creator, protector, and judge; but the morality and merit of society is the product of very complicated and diversified motives, and is never so superabundant as to suffer uninjured the loss of any one of its incentives and supports. The fame of an applauded ancestor has stimulated many to perform noble actions, or to preserve an honourable character, and will continue so to operate while human nature exists. It creates a sentiment of honour, a dread of disgrace, an useful pride of name, which, though not universally efficient, will frequently check the vicious

⁶ Polych. Higd. 3 Gale, p. 224.

⁷ MS. Cott. Lib. Vit. A. 15. p. 129, 130.

propensities of passion or selfishness, when reason or religion has exhorted in vain. The distinction of birth may be therefore added to the exaltation of the female sex, as another of those peculiarities which have tended to extract from the barbarism of the Gothic nations a far nobler character than any that the rich climates of the East could rear.

By property;

That there was a nobility from landed property, distinct from that of birth, attainable by every one, and possessing (what noble birth had not of itself) political rank and immunities, is clear, from several passages. It is mentioned in the laws, as an incentive to proper actions, that through God's gift a servile thræl may become a thane, and a ceorl an eorl, just as a singer may become a priest, and a bocere (a writer) a bishop.⁹ In the time of Ethelstan it is expressly declared, that if a ceorl have the full proprietorship of five hides of his own land, a church, and kitchen, a bell-house, a burhgate-seat, and an appropriate office in the king's hall, he shall thenceforth be a thegn, or thane, by right.⁹ The same laws provide that a thegn may arrive at the dignity of an eorl, and that a massere, or merchant, who went three times over sea with his own craft, might become a thegn.¹⁰ But the most curious passage on this subject is that which attests, that without the possession of a certain quantity of landed property, the dignity of sitting in the witenagemot could not be enjoyed, not even though the person was noble already. An abbot of Ely had a brother who was courting the daughter of a great man, but the lady refused him, because, although noble, he had not the lordship of forty hides, and therefore could not be numbered among the procures or witenas. To enable him to gratify his love and her ambition, the abbot conveyed to him certain lands belonging to his monastery. The nuptials took place, and the fraud was for some time undiscovered.¹¹

⁹ Wilk. Leg. Sax. 112.

⁹ Ibid. 70.

¹⁰ Wilk. Leg. Sax. 71.

¹¹ Hist. Eliens. 3 Gale Serip. 513.

The principle of distinguishing men by their property is also established in the laws. Thus we read of twyhyndum, of syxhyndum, and of twelfhyndum men.¹² A twyhynde man was level in his were with a ceorl,¹³ and a twelfhynde with a thegn.¹⁴ But though property might confer distinction, yet it was the possession of landed property which raised a man to those titles which might be called ennobling. Hence it is mentioned, that though a ceorl should attain to a helmet, mail, and a gold-hilted sword, yet if he had no land he must still remain a ceorl.¹⁵

The species of nobility which was gained by official dignities appears to have appertained to the ealdorman, the eorl, the heretoch, and the thegn, when he was a king's thegn. A certain portion of rank was also conceded to the gerefa and the scir-reve. There was a still inferior degree of consequence derived from being ealdor of an hundred, and such-like minor offices, which the laws sometimes recognize.¹⁶

The dignity from office conferred some beneficial distinction on the family of the person possessing it; for the laws speak of an eorl-cunde widow, and defend her by exacting compensations, for wrongs committed against her, much superior to those of other women.¹⁷

Official dignities were conferred by the king, and were liable to be taken away by him on illegal conduct. This is the language with which, according to Asser, Alfred addressed his great men: "I wonder at your audacity, that by the gift of God, and by my gift, you have assumed the ministry and the degree of the wise men, and yet have neglected the study and labour of wisdom. Therefore I command, either that you lay aside the ministry of earthly power which you enjoy, or that you study wisdom more attentively."¹⁸ In the laws we find an ealdorman threatened

¹² Wilk. Leg. Sax. 25. 33.

¹³ Ibid. 64. and 3 Gale, 423.

¹⁴ Leg. Sax. 16. ¹⁵ Ibid. 71.

¹⁶ As in the ealdor of the hundred. Ibid.

p. 81.

¹⁷ Ibid. 7.

¹⁸ Asser Vit. Ælf. 71.

with the loss of his shire, unless the king pardon him, for conniving at the escape of a thief.¹⁹ So a thegn is threatened with the perpetual loss of his thegnship for an unjust judgment, unless he prove by oath that he knew not how to give a better decision. But the king in this case also had the option of restoring him.²⁰ In the same manner the gerefas are menaced with the deprivation of their post of honour, on committing the offences described in the law.²¹ The exact nature and duties of these dignified officers will be considered more minutely under the head of Government.

The rest of the Anglo-Saxon society consisted of three descriptions of men, the free, the freed, and the servile.

Freemen.

In talking of the Anglo-Saxon freemen, we must not let our minds expatiate on an ideal character which eloquence and hope have invested with charms almost magical. No utopian state, no paradise of such a pure republic as reason can conceive, but as human nature can neither establish nor support, is about to shine around us when we describe the Anglo-Saxon freeman. A freeman among our ancestors was not that dignified independent being, "lord of the lion heart and eagle eye," which our poets fancy under this appellation; he was rather an Anglo-Saxon not in the servile state; not property attached to the land, as the slaves were; he was freed from the oppression of arbitrary bondage; he was often a servant, and a master, but he had the liberty to quit the service of one lord and choose another.

That the Anglo-Saxon freemen were frequently servants, and had their masters, may be proved by a variety of passages in our ancient remains: "If any give flesh to his servants on fast-days, whether they be free or servile, he must compensate for the pillory."²² So, in the laws of Ina, "if a freeman work on a Sunday without his lord's orders, he

¹⁹ Leges Inæ, p. 20.

²⁰ Leges Edgari, p. 78; et Cnuti, p. 135.

²¹ Leges Sax. p. 69.

²² Leg. Wihtrædi, 11.

“ shall lose his liberty, or pay sixty shillings.”²³ That freemen were in laborious and subordinate conditions, is also strongly implied by a law of Alfred, which says, “ These days are “ forgiven to all freemen, excepting servants and working “ slaves.” The days were, twelve days at Christmas, Passion week, and Easter week, and a few others.²⁴ An Anglo-Saxon, in a charter, says, with all my men, both servile and freemen.²⁵

Their state of freedom had great benefits and some inconveniences: a slave being the property of another, his master was responsible for his delinquencies; but a freeman, not having a lord to pay for him, was obliged to be under perpetual bail or sureties, who engaged to produce him whenever he should be accused.²⁶ Being of more personal consideration in society, his mulcts were proportionably greater. If he stole from the king, he was obliged to pay a ninefold compensation;²⁷ if a freeman stole from a freeman, he was to compensate threefold, and all his goods and the penalty were to go to the king.²⁸ The principle of greater compensation from the free than the servile pervades our ancient laws.

But the benefits of freedom are at all times incalculable, and have been happily progressive. If they had been no more than the power of changing their master at their own pleasure, as our present domestic servants do, even this was a most valuable privilege, and this they exercised. We have an instance of a certain huntsman mentioned, who left the lordship of his master and his land, and chose himself another lord.²⁹

They had many other advantages; their persons were frequently respected in their punishments: thus a theow who broke an appointed fast might be whipped, but a freeman was to pay a mulct.³⁰ It was no small benefit that the king

²³ Leg. Inæ, 15.

²⁴ Leg. Ælf. 44.

²⁵ Thorpe Reg. Roff. 357.

²⁶ Leg. Ethelr. 102.

²⁷ Leg. Ethelb. 2.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ MS. Charters of the late Mr. Astle, 28.

³⁰ Leg. Sax. 53.

was their legal lord and patron: "If any kill a freeman, the king shall receive fifty shillings for lordship."³¹ Upon the same principle, if a freeman were taken with a theft in his hand, the king had the choice of the punishment to be inflicted on him; he might kill him, he might sell him over sea, or receive his wære.³² That they were valued and protected by our ancient legislation, is evident from the provision made for their personal liberty: whoever put a freeman into bonds, was to forfeit twenty shillings.³³

This happy state of freedom might, however, be lost: the degradation from liberty to slavery was one of the punishments attached to the free. We have mentioned already, that one offence which incurred it, was violating the sabbath. A freeman reduced to slavery by the penalties of law was called a wite theow,³⁴ a penal slave. Under this denomination he occurs in the laws, and is frequently mentioned in wills. Thus Wynfleda, directing the emancipation of some slaves, extends the same benevolence to her wite theow, if there be any.³⁵ So an archbishop directs all such to be freed who in his time had been mulcted of their liberty.³⁶ A freeman so reduced to slavery became again subject to corporal punishment; for it was ordered, that one who had stolen while free, might receive stripes from his prosecutor. It was also ordered, that if, while a wite theow, he stole, he was to be hanged.³⁷

Slaves.

It is well known that a large proportion of the Anglo-Saxon population was in a state of slavery. This unfortunate class of men, who were called theow and esne, are frequently mentioned in our ancient laws and charters, and are exhibited in the servile condition of being another's property, without any political existence or social consideration.

They were bought and sold with land, and were conveyed in the grants of it promiscuously with the cattle and other

³¹ Leg. Sax. p. 2.

³² Ibid. p. 12.

³³ Ibid. p. 3.

³⁴ Ibid. p. 22.

³⁵ Hickes, Pref. Gram.

³⁶ MS. Claud. C. 9. p. 125.

³⁷ Leg. Sax. 22. and p. 18.

property upon it. Thus, in an enumeration of property on an estate, it is said there were a hundred sheep, fifty-five swine, two men, and five yoked oxen.³⁸ At another time we find some land given up without injury to any thing belonging to it, whether men, cattle, or food.³⁹ So one bought land for thirty pounds, and gave seven pounds more for all the things on it, as men, stock, and corn.⁴⁰

In the Anglo-Saxon wills these wretched beings are given away precisely as we now dispose of our plate, our furniture, or our money. An archbishop bequeaths some land to an abbey, with ten oxen and two men.⁴¹ Ælfhelm bequeaths his chief mansion at Gyrstingthorpe, with all the property that stood thereon, both provisions and men.⁴² Wynfleda, in her will, gives to her daughter the land at Ebbelesburn, and those men, the property, and all that thereon be; afterwards she gives "to Eadmær as much property and as many men as to him had been bequeathed before at Hafene."⁴³ In another part of her will she says, "of those theowan men at Cinnuc, she bequeaths to Eadwold, Ceolstan the son of Elstan, and the son of Effa, and Burwhyn Mærtin; and she bequeaths to Eadgyfu, Ælfsige the cook, and Tefl the daughter of Wareburga, and Herestan and his wife, and Ecelm and his wife and their child, and Cynestan, and Wynsige, and the son of Bryhtric, and Edwyn, and the son of Bunel, and the daughter of Ælfwer." Wulfgar in his will says, "I give to Ælfere abbot the lands at Ferscesford, with the provisions, and with the men, and with all the produce as it is cultivated." This will contains several bequests of this sort.⁴⁴

Their servile state was attended with all the horrors of slavery, descending on the posterity of the subjected individuals. A duke in Mercia added to a donation "six men,

³⁸ 3 Gale Script. 481.

³⁹ Heming. Chartul. p. 166.

⁴⁰ 3 Gale, 478.

⁴¹ MS. Cott. C. 9. p. 125.

⁴² Test. Elfhelmi. App. Sax. Dict.

⁴³ Test. Wynfl. Hickes, Pref.

⁴⁴ Test. Wulf. Hickes, Diss. Ep. 54.

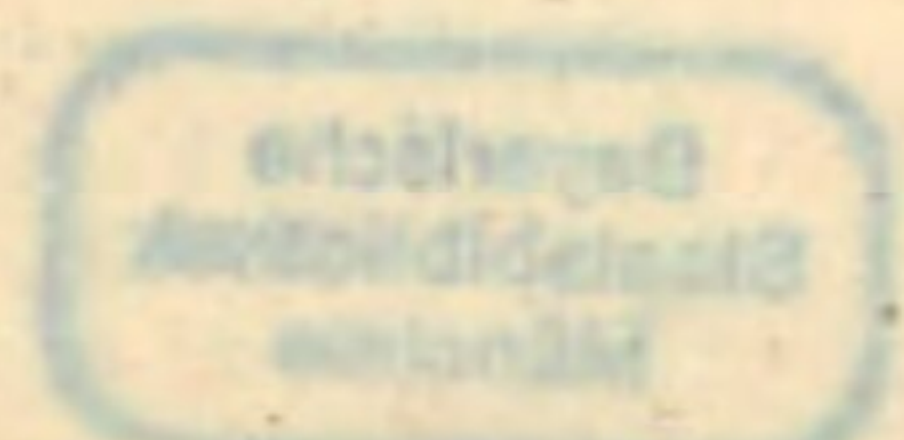
“ who formerly belonged to the royal villa in Berhtanwellan,
 “ with all their offspring and their family, that they may
 “ always belong to the land of the aforesaid church in per-
 “ petual inheritance.” To this gift is added the names of the
 slaves. “ These are the names of those men that are in this
 “ writing, with their offspring, and their family that come
 “ from them in perpetual heritage: Alhmund, Tidulf, Tidheh,
 “ Lull, Lull, Eadwulf.”⁴⁵ That whole families were in a state
 of slavery, appears most satisfactorily from the instruments
 of manumission which remain to us. In them we find a man,
 his wife, and their offspring, frequently redeemed together;
 and in Wynfleda’s will the wives and daughters of some slaves
 she names are directed to be emancipated. Ethelstan, after
 stating that he freed Eadelm, because he had become king,
 adds, “ and I give to the children the same benefit as I give
 “ to the father.”

Some of the prices of slaves appear in the written contracts
 of their purchase which have survived. “ Here is declared
 “ in this book, that Ediwic, the widow of Sæwgels, bought
 “ Gladu at Colewin for half a pound, for the price and the
 “ toll; and Ælword, the port gerefa, took the toll; and thereto
 “ was witness Leowin brother of Leoword, and Ælwi blaca,
 “ and Ælwin the king, and Landbiriht, and Alca, and
 “ Sæwerd; and may he have God’s curse for ever that this
 “ ever undoes. Amen.” So Egelsig bought Wynric, of an
 abbot, for an yre of gold; another was bought for three
 mancusæ.⁴⁶ The tolls mentioned in some of the contracts for
 slaves may be illustrated out of Domesday-book. In the
 burgh of Lewis it says, that, at every purchase and sale, money
 was paid to the gerefa: for an ox, a farthing was collected;
 for a man, four pennies.

That the Anglo-Saxons were sold at Rome we learn from

⁴⁵ Heming: Chart. Wig. p. 61, 62; and
 for the next paragraphs see Hickes, Diss.
 Ep. p. 12, and his Preface; and Wanley’s
 Catalogue, p. 181.

⁴⁶ Hickes, Diss. p. 12; and App. Sax.
 Dict.



the well-known anecdote mentioned by Bede, of Pope Gregory seeing them in the markets there. We also read of one being sold in London to a Frisian;⁴⁷ and of a person in France relieving many from slavery, especially Saxons, probably continental Saxons, who then abounded in that country.⁴⁸ It was expressly enjoined in one of the later laws, that no Christians, or innocent man, should be sold from the land.⁴⁹ They appear to have been very numerous. It is mentioned that there were two hundred and fifty slaves, men and women, in the lands given by the king to Wilfrid.⁵⁰ But to have a just idea of their number, we must inspect their enumeration in Domesday-book. No portion of land scarcely is there mentioned without some.

When we consider the condition of the servile, as it appears in the Saxon laws, we shall find it to be very degraded indeed. They were allowed to be put into bonds, and to be whipped.⁵¹ They might be branded;⁵² and on one occasion they are spoken of as if actually yoked: "Let every man know his teams of men, of horses, and oxen."⁵³

They were allowed to accumulate some property of their own. We infer this from the laws having subjected them to

⁴⁷ Bede, 166.

⁴⁸ Bouquet's *Recueil des Historiens*, t. 3. p. 553.

⁴⁹ Wilk. Leg. Sax. p. 107. I take the following from Dr. Henry, vol. iv. p. 238. "Some young men were exported from Northumberland to be sold, according to a custom which seems to be natural to the people of that country, of selling their nearest relations for their own advantage." Malmsb. lib. i. c. 3. "There is a seaport-town, called Bristol, opposite to Ireland, into which its inhabitants make frequent voyages on account of trade. Wulfstan cured the people of this town of a most odious and inveterate custom, which they derived from their ancestors, of buying men and women in all parts of England, and exporting them to Ireland for the sake of gain. The young women they commonly got with

"child, and carried them to market in their pregnancy, that they might bring a better price. You might have seen, with sorrow, long ranks of young persons of both sexes, and of the greatest beauty, tied together with ropes, and daily exposed to sale: nor were these men ashamed, O horrid wickedness! to give up their nearest relations, nay their own children to slavery. Wulfstan, knowing the obstinacy of these people, sometimes stayed two months among them, preaching every Lord's day; by which, in process of time, he made so great an impression upon their minds, that they abandoned that wicked trade, and set an example to all the rest of England to do the same."

⁵⁰ Bede, iv. c. 13.

⁵¹ Wilk. Leg. Sax. 15. 22. 52, 53. 59.

⁵² Ibid. p. 103. 139.

⁵³ Ibid. p. 47.

BOOK
VIII.

pecuniary punishments, and from their frequently purchasing their own freedom. If an esne did theow-work against his lord's command, on Sunday evening after sun-set and before the moon set, he was to pay eighty shillings to his lord.⁵⁴ If a theow gave offerings to idols, or eat flesh willingly on a fast-day, he was mulcted six shillings, or had to suffer in his hide.⁵⁵ If an esne killed another esne, who was in no act of offence, he forfeited all he was worth; but if he killed a freeman, his geld was to be one hundred shillings; he was to be given up by his owner, who was to add the price of another man.⁵⁶

A father, if very poor, was allowed to give his son up to slavery for seven years, if the child consented to it.⁵⁷

Freed-men.

If the mass of the Anglo-Saxon population had continued in this servile state, the progress of the nation in the improvements of society would have been very small. But a better destiny awaited them; the custom of manumission began, and the diffusion of Christianity, by mildly attempering the feelings of the individual, and by compelling him to cultivate acts of benevolence as a religious duty, increased the prevalence of the practice.

We have many instances of the emancipation of slaves: a landholder, in Edgar's time, who had thirty men on his grounds, directed that out of these, thirteen should be liberated as lot should decide, so that, placed in the highway, they might go wherever they pleased.⁵⁸ It seems to have been an exercise of philanthropy, not uncommon in wills, to give freedom to some of this pitiable class of human kind. Wynflæda displays the compassionate feelings of her sex very strikingly, by directing the emancipation of several of her slaves: "Let Wulware be freed, and follow whomsoever he likes best; and let Wulflæde be freed, on the condition that she follow Æthelflæda and Eadgifa (her daughters); and let Gerburg

⁵⁴ Wilk. Leg. Sax. p. 11.

⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 11. ⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 8.

⁵⁷ 1 Wilk. Conc. 130.

⁵⁸ 3 Gale Script. 407.

“ be freed, and Miscin, and the daughter of Burhulf at
 “ Cinnuc; and Ælsige, and his wife, and his eldest daughter,
 “ and Ceolstane’s wife; and at Ceorlatune let Pifus be freed,
 “ and Edwin, and ———’s wife; and at Saccuncumbe let
 “ Ædelm be freed, and man, and Johannan, and Spror and
 “ his wife, and Enefette, and Gersand, and Snel; and at
 “ Colleshylle let Æthelgythe be freed, and Bicca’s wife, and
 “ Æffa, and Beda, and Gurhan’s wife, and let Bryhsig’s wife,
 “ the sister of Wulfar, be freed; and ——— the workman, and
 “ Wulfgythe the daughter of Ælfswythe.”⁵⁹

We have many instruments of manumission extant, from which we learn many of the causes which produced it.

Sometimes individuals, from their benevolence, gave them their freedom. Thus Halwun Noce of Exeter, freed Hagel, his family woman;⁶⁰ and so Lifgith and his two children were declared free.⁶¹ Sometimes the charitable kindness of others redeemed them: “ Here appeareth in this Christ’s book, that
 “ Siwine the son of Leofwie, at Lincumb, hath bought
 “ Sydelflæda out with five shillings and * * * * pennies,
 “ to perpetual freedom, of John the bishop and all the family
 “ at Bath; and hereto witness is Godric Ladda, and Sæwold,
 “ and his two sons, Scirewold and Brihtwold.”⁶² So Æilgyfu the Good redeemed Hig and Dunna, and their offspring, for thirteen mancson.⁶³ We will give another specimen of these benevolent actions: “ Here it is stated in this writing, that
 “ Aluric, the canon of Exeter, redeemed Reinold and his chil-
 “ dren, and all their offspring, of Herberdi, for two shillings;
 “ and Aluric called them free and sac-less, in town and from
 “ town, for God’s love; and the witness to this is,” &c.⁶⁴

Sometimes piety procured a manumission. Thus two Irishmen were freed for the sake of an abbot’s soul.⁶⁵ But the most interesting kind of emancipation appears in those

⁵⁹ Hickes, Pref. xxii.

⁶⁰ Hickes, Diss. Ep. 12.

⁶¹ Sax. Dict. App. ⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Hickes, Diss. Ep. 12.

⁶⁴ Wanley Catal. 152.

⁶⁵ Sax. Dict. App.

writings which announce to us, that the slaves had purchased their own liberty, or that of their family. Thus Edric bought the perpetual freedom of Sægyfa, his daughter, and all her offspring. So, for one pound, Elfwig the Red purchased his own liberty, and Sæwi Hagg bought out his two sons.⁶⁶ Godwin the Pale is also notified to have liberated himself, his wife, and children, for fifteen shillings. Brightmær bought the perpetual freedom of himself, his wife Ælgyfu, their children and grandchildren, for two pounds. Leofenoth redeemed himself and his offspring for five oran and twelve sheep; and Ægelsig bought his son's liberty for sixty pennies.⁶⁷

The Anglo-Saxon laws recognised the liberation of slaves, and placed them under legal protection. In one of them it is declared, that if any of them freed his slave at the altar, the theow should become folk-free, or free among the people; but his former owner was to possess his property, his weregeld, and his mund.⁶⁸ It was enjoined by the synod, held in 816, that at the death of a bishop, his English slaves, who had been reduced to slavery in his lifetime, should be freed.⁶⁹

The liberal feelings of our ancestors towards their enslaved domestics are not only evidenced in the frequent manumissions, but also in the generous gifts which they appear to have made them. The grants of land from masters to their servants are very common.

⁶⁶ See all these emancipations in the Appendix to the Saxon Dictionary.

⁶⁷ Hickes, Diss. Ep. 13. 9. 10.

⁶⁸ Wilk. Leg. Sax. 11.

⁶⁹ Spel. Conc. 330.

CHAP. X.

Their Gilds, or Clubs.

THE gilds, or social confederations, in which many of the Anglo-Saxons chose to arrange themselves, deserve our peculiar attention; we will describe them as they appear to us from some MSS. of their instruments of association which are yet in being.

CHAP.
X.

One of these is a gild-scipe, composed of eighteen members, at Exeter, whose names are mentioned in it, and to which the bishop and canons are stated to have acceded. It recites, that they have undertaken the association in mutual fraternity; the objects of their union appear to have been, that every hearth, or family, should, at Easter in every year, pay one penny; and on the death of every member of the gild one penny, whether man or woman, for the soul's scot. The canons were to have this soul's scot, and to perform the necessary rites.¹ This gild-scipe somewhat resembles one of our benefit societies, in which the members make small stated payments, and are buried at the expences of the fund so raised.

Another gild-scipe at Exeter purports to have been made for God's love, and their soul's need, and to have agreed that their meetings should be thrice a year; viz. at Michaelmas, at Mary's Mass, over Midwinter, and at the holy days after Easter. Every member was to bring a certain portion of malt, and every cniht was to add a less quantity and some honey. The mass-priest was to sing a mass for their living friends, and another for their dead friends, and every brother two psalms. At the death of every member, six psalms were

¹ Our illustrious Hickes has printed this gild-scipe agreement, with others, in his Dissert. Epist. p. 18.

to be chanted; and every man at the rub-pope was to pay five pennies, and at a house-burning one penny. If any man neglected the appointed days, he was to be fined the first time in three masses, the second in five, and the third time no man was to share with him, unless sickness or the compulsion of the Lord occasioned his absence. If any one neglected his payments at the appointed time, he was to pay double; and if any member mis-greeted another, he was to forfeit thirty pence. It concludes thus: "We pray for the love of God that every man hold this meeting rightly, so as we have rightly agreed it should be. May God assist us in this."²

There is an instrument made on the establishment of a gild of thegns at Cambridge. By this every member was to take an oath of true fidelity to each other, and the gild was always to assist him who had the most just claim. If any of the gild died, all the gild-scipe was to carry him wherever he desired; and if any neglected to attend on this occasion, he was fined a syster of honey; and the gild-scipe was to furnish half of the provisions at the interment, and every one was to pay two-pence for alms, and what was suitable was to be taken to St. Etheldrytha. If any of the gild should need the assistance of his companions, and it was mentioned to the gerefa nearest the gild, then if the gerefa neglected him, unless the gild itself was near, he was to pay one pound. If the lord neglected it, he was to forfeit the same sum, unless his superior claims compelled him to the inattention, or sickness prevented. If any killed one of a gild, eight pounds were to be the compensation; and if the homicide did not pay it, all the gildship were to avenge their member, and to support the consequences: if one did it, all were to bear alike. If any of the gild killed any other person, and was in distress, and had to pay for the wrong, and the slain were a twelfhinde person,

² Hickes, Dissert. Epist. p. 21, 22.

every one of the gild must help with half a mark. If the slain be a ceorl, let each pay two ora, or one ora if a Welshman. If the gild-man kills any one wilfully or foolishly, he must bear himself what he should do; and if he should kill any of the gild by his own folly, he and his relations must abide the consequence, and pay eight pounds for the gild, or else lose its society and friendship. If any of the gild eat or drink with the homicide, unless before the king, or the lord bishop, or the ealdorman, he must pay a pound, unless, with two persons sitting, he can prove that he did not know it. If any of the gild misgreet another, let him pay a syster of honey, unless, with two friends, he can clear himself. If a cniht draw a weapon, let him pay his lord a pound, and let the lord have it where he may, and all the gild-scipe shall help him to get it. If the cniht wound another, let the lord avenge it. If the cniht sits within the path, let him pay a syster of honey; and if he has a foot-seat, let him do the same. If any of the gild die, or fall sick, out of the district, let the gild fetch him, and bring him as he wished, either dead or alive, under the penalty before mentioned. If he die at home, and the gild seek not the body, nor his morgen spæce, let a syster of honey be forfeited.³

These gilds are sometimes alluded to in the laws. If a man without paternal relations should fight and kill another, then his maternal kinsmen were ordered to pay one-third of the were, his gild a third, and for the other part his gild was to escape.⁴ In London there appear to have been free gilds: "This is the council that the bishops and gerefas that belong to London borough have pronounced, and with pledges confirmed in our free gilds."⁵ In a charter concerning Canterbury, the three companies of the citizens within the walls, and those without, are mentioned.⁶ Domesday-book likewise

³ Hickes, Dissert. Epist. p. 20.

⁴ Wilkins, Leg. Sax. p. 41; and see the laws, p. 18.

⁵ Ibid. p. 65.

⁶ MS. Chart. penes the late Mr. Astle, "tha threo gefersiras inne burhwara and utan burhwara." No. 28.

notices a gild of the clergy in the same city.⁷ They seem, on the whole, to have been friendly associations made for mutual aid and contribution, to meet the pecuniary exigencies which were perpetually arising from burials, legal exactions, penal mulcts, and other payments or compensations. That much good fellowship was connected with them, can be doubted by no one. The fines of their own imposition imply that the materials of conviviality were not forgotten. These associations may be called the Anglo-Saxon clubs.

That in mercantile towns and sea-ports there were also gilds, or fraternities of men constituted for the purpose of carrying on more successful enterprizes in commerce, even in the Anglo-Saxon times, appears to be a fact. Domesday-book mentions the gihalla, or guildhall of the burghers of Dover.⁸

⁷ "32 inauguras quas tenent clerici de villa in gildam suam." Domesday, f. 3.

⁸ "In quibus erat gihalla burgensium." Domesday, f. 1.

CHAP. XI.

Their Trades, Mechanical Arts, and Foreign Commerce.

IN the present state, and under the fortunate constitution of the British islands, our tradesmen and manufacturers are an order of men who contribute essentially to uphold our national rank and character. They are not only the fountains of that commerce which rewards us with the wealth of the world, but they are perpetually supplying the other classes and professions of society with new accessions of persons and property, which keeps the great machine of our political greatness in constant strength and activity.

CHAP.
XI.

Some proportion of these advantages has been reaped by England, from the trading part of its community, in every stage of its commercial progression. But the farther we recede into antiquity, the benefits were more rare, because this class of society in the remote ages were neither numerous, opulent, nor civilized. Our earlier ancestors had not learnt the utility of dividing labour; hence their productions were less skilful. The tradesmen of the Anglo-Saxons were, for the most part, men in a servile state. The clergy, the rich, and the great, had domestic servants, who were qualified to supply them with those articles of trade and manufacture which were in common use. Hence, in monasteries, we find smiths, carpenters, millers, illuminators, architects, agriculturists, fishermen. Thus a monk is described as well skilled in smith craft.* Thus Wynflæda, in her will, mentions the servants she employed in weaving and sewing; and there are many grants of land remaining, in which men of landed property rewarded their servants who excelled in different trades.

* Bede, v. c. 14, and p. 634.

In one grant, the brother of Godwin gives to a monastery a manor, with its appendages; that is, his overseer and all his chattels, his smith, carpenter, fisherman, miller; all these servants, and all their goods and chattels. (1 Dugd. Mon. 306.)

By degrees, the manumission of slaves increased the numbers of the independent part of the lower orders. Some of the emancipated became agricultural labourers, and took land of the clergy and the great, paying them an annual gafol, or rent; but many went to the burghs and towns, and as the king was the lord of the free, they resided in these under his protection, and became free burghers or burgesses. In these burghs and towns they appear to have occupied houses, paying him rent, or other occasional compensations, and sometimes performing services for him. Thus, in Canterbury, Edward had fifty-one burghers paying him gafol or rent, and over two hundred and twelve others he had the legal jurisdiction.² In Bath, the king had sixty-four burghers, who yielded four pounds.³ In Exeter, the king had two hundred and eighty-five houses, paying eighteen pounds a year.⁴ In some other places we find such compensations as these mentioned: "twelve sheep and lambs, and one bloom of iron, from every free man."⁵ For toll, gafol, and all customs, Oxford paid the king twenty pounds a year, and six sextaria of honey.⁶ At Dover, when the king's messenger arrived, the burghers had to pay three-pence for transporting his horse in winter, and two-pence in summer. They also provided a steersman and helper.⁷

In the burghs, some of the inhabitants were under other lords. Thus in Romenel twenty-five burghers belonged to the archbishop. In Bath, after the king's burghers are mentioned, it is said that ninety burghers of other men yielded sixty shillings. In the same place, the church of Saint Peter had thirty-

² Domesday-book, fo. 2.

³ Ibid. p. 87.

⁴ Ibid. p. 100.

⁵ Ibid. fo. 87, and 92, and 94.

⁶ Ibid. Com. Oxf.

⁷ Ibid. fo. 1.

four burghers, who paid twenty shillings.⁸ At Romenel, besides those who were under the archbishop, one Robert is stated to have had fifty burghers, of whom the king had every service; but they were freed, on account of their service at sea, from every custom, except robbery, breach of the peace, and forestel.⁹

In these places, the services and charges were sometimes most rigorously exacted. It is stated of Hereford, that if any one wished to retire from the city, he might, with leave of the gerefa, sell his house, if he found a purchaser who was willing to perform in his stead the accustomed services; and in this event the gerefa had the third penny of the sale. But if any one, from his poverty, could not do the regular service, he was compelled to abandon his house to the gerefa without any consideration. The gerefa had then to take care that the house did not remain empty, that the king might not lose his dues.¹⁰

In some burgs, the members had been so wealthy as to have acquired themselves a property in the burg. Thus, at Canterbury, the burghers had forty-five mansuras without the city, of which they took the gafol and the custom, while the king retained the legal jurisdiction. They also held of the king thirty-three acres of land in their gild.¹¹

But this state of subjection to gafols, customs, and services, under which the people of the burgs and towns continued, had this great advantage over the condition of the servile, that the exacted burthens were definite and certain, and though sometimes expensive, were never oppressive. Such a state was indeed an independence, compared with the degradation of a theow; and we probably see in these burghers the condition of the free part of the community, who were not actually freeholders of land, or who, though freed, had not wholly left the domestic service of their masters.

⁸ Domesday-book, fo. 10.

⁹ Ibid, fo. 87.

¹⁰ These customs are excerpted by Gale out of Domesday-book. Hist. iii. p. 768.

¹¹ Domesday, fo. 2.

BOOK
VIII.

One of the most important trades of the Anglo-Saxons was the smith, who is very frequently mentioned. Aldhelm takes the trouble to describe the "convenience of the anvil, the "rigid hardness of the beating hammer, and the tenacity of "the glowing tongs;" and to remark, that "the gem-bearing "belts, and diadems of kings, and various instruments of "glory, were made from the tools of iron."¹² The smiths who worked in iron were called isern-smithas. They had also the goldsmith, the seolfersmith (silversmith), and the arsmith or coppersmith. In the dialogues before quoted, the smith says, "Whence the share to the ploughman, or the goad, but "from my art? whence to the fisherman an angle, or to the "shoe-wyrhta an awl, or to the sempstress a needle, but from "my art?" The other replies, "Those in thy smithery only "give us iron fire-sparks, the noise of beating hammers, and "blowing bellows."¹³ Smiths are frequently mentioned in Domesday. In the city of Hereford, there were six smiths, who paid each one penny for his forge, and who made one hundred and twenty pieces of iron from the king's ore. To each of them, three-pence was paid as a custom, and they were freed from all other services.¹⁴ In a district of Somerset, it is twice stated, that a mill yielded two plumbas of iron.¹⁵ Gloucester paid to the king thirty-six dicras of iron, and one hundred ductile rods, to make nails for the king's ships.¹⁶

The treow-wyrhta, literally tree or wood-workman, or, in modern phrase, the carpenter, was an occupation as important as the smith's. In the dialogues above mentioned, he says he makes houses, and various vessels and ships.

The shoemaker and salter appear also in the dialogues: the sceowyrhta, or shoemaker, seems to have been a comprehensive trade, and to have united some that are now very distinct businesses. He says, "My craft is very useful and necessary

¹² Aldhelm de Laud. Virg. 298.¹³ MS. Tib. A. 3.¹⁴ Domesday-book, in loc.¹⁵ Domesday-book, fo. 94.¹⁶ Ibid. in loc.

“ to you. I buy hides and skins, and prepare them by my
“ art, and make of them shoes of various kinds; and none of
“ you can winter without my craft.” He subjoins a list of
the articles which he fabricates: viz.

Ankle leathers,	Bridle thongs,	Leather neck-pieces,
Shoes,	Trappings,	Halters,
Leather hose,	Flasks,	Wallets,
Bottles,	Boiling vessels,	Pouches.

The salter, baker, cook, and fisherman, have been described before.

Besides the persons who made those trades their business, some of the clergy appear to us as labouring to excel in the mechanical arts. Thus Dunstan, besides being competent to draw and paint the patterns for a lady's robe, was also a smith, and worked on all the metals. Among other labours of his industry, he made two great bells for the church at Abingdon. His friend Ethelwold, the bishop, made two other bells for the same place, of a smaller size; and a wheel full of small bells, much gilt, to be turned round, for its music, on feast days. He also displayed much art in the fabrication of a large silver table of curious workmanship.¹⁷ Stigand, the bishop of Winchester, made two images and a crucifix, and gilt and placed them in the cathedral of his diocese.¹⁸ One of our kings made a monk, who was a skilful goldsmith, an abbot.¹⁹ It was even exacted by law that the clergy should pursue these occupations; for Edgar says, “ We command
“ that every priest, to increase knowledge, diligently learn
“ some handicraft.”²⁰

The art of glass-making was unknown in England in the seventh century, when Benedict, the abbot of Weremouth, procured men from France, who not only glazed the windows of his church and monastery, but taught the Anglo-Saxons the art of making glass for windows, lamps, drinking vessels,

¹⁷ Dugd. Mon. 104.

¹⁸ Anglia Sacra, i. p. 293.

¹⁹ MS. Claud. C. 9.

²⁰ Wilk. Leg. Anglo-Sax. 83.

and for other uses." Our progress in the art was slow; for we find the disciple of Bede thus addressing a bishop of France on this subject in the next century: "If there be any man in your district who can make glass vessels well, when time permits, condescend to send him to me; or if there is any one out of your diocese, in the power of others, I beg your fraternity will persuade him to come to us, for we are ignorant and helpless in this art: and if it should happen that any of the glass-makers should, by your diligence and with the divine pleasure, be suffered to come to us, be assured that if I am alive I will receive him with kind courtesy."²²

The fortunate connection which Christianity established between the clergy of Europe, favoured the advancement of all the mechanical arts. We read perpetually of presents of the productions of human labour and skill passing from the more civilized countries to those more rude. We read of a church having a patine made with Greek workmanship;²³ and also of a bishop in England who was a Greek by birth.²⁴

They had the arts of weaving, embroidering, and dying. Aldhelm intimates these: "We do not negligently despise the woollen stamina of threads worked by the woof and the shuttles, even though the purple robe and silken pomp of emperors shine." Again, "The shuttles not filled with purple only but with various colours, are moved here and there among the thick spreading of the threads, and by the embroidering art they adorn all the woven work with various groupes of images."²⁵ Edward the Elder had his daughters taught to exercise their needle and their distaff.²⁶ Indeed, the Anglo-Saxon ladies were so much accustomed to spinning, that just as we in legal phrase, and by a reference to former habits now obsolete, term unmarried ladies spinsters, so Alfred

²² Bede Hist. Abb. Wer. 225.

²³ 16 Mag. Bib. Pat. 88.

²⁴ Dugd. Mon. p. 40.

²⁵ 3 Gale x. Script. 464.

²⁶ Aldhelm de Laud. Virg. 298. 305. He also mentions the fucorum muneribus. ib.

²⁷ Malmsb. lib. ii. c. 5. p. 47.

in his will, with true application, called the female part of his family the spindle side. The Norman historian remarks of our ancient countrywomen that they excelled with the needle and in gold embroidery.²⁷ Aldhelm's robe is described to have been made of a most delicate thread of a purple ground, and that within black circles the figures of peacocks were worked among them of ample size.²⁸

The external commerce of these ancient times was confined, because their imperfect civilization, and the poverty of the great body of their population, prevented an extensive demand for foreign commodities. But the habit of visiting distant parts for the purposes of traffic had already begun. Ohther's voyage proves, that men went to the North, both for the purposes of traffic and of discovery: he says, they pursued whales for their teeth, and made ropes of their hides.²⁹ We read of merchants from Ireland landing at Cambridge with cloths, and exposing their merchandize to sale.³⁰ London, even in the seventh century, is mentioned as a port which ships frequented,³¹ and we find merchants' ships sailing to Rome.³² The trading vessels sometimes joined together, and went out armed for their mutual protection;³³ and we may suppose that while piracy lasted, navigation was unfrequent.

In the Saxon dialogues, the merchant (*mancgere*) is introduced: "I say that I am useful to the king, and to *caldor-men*, and to the rich, and to all people. I ascend my ship with my merchandize, and sail over the sea-like places, and sell my things, and buy dear things which are not produced in this land, and I bring them to you here with great danger over the sea; and sometimes I suffer shipwreck, with the loss of all my things, scarcely escaping myself." "What do you bring to us?" "Skins, silks, costly gems, and gold; various

²⁷ Gesta Norman. ap. Du Chesne, 211.

²⁸ 3 Gale x. Script. 351.

²⁹ See Alfred's account of this voyage in

a subsequent chapter on the Saxon literature.

³⁰ 3 Gale, 482.

³² Bede, 294.

³¹ Dugd. Mon. 76.

³³ Hist. Wilkin.

garments, pigment, wine, oil, ivory, and orichalcus, copper, and tin, silver, glass, and such-like." "Will you sell your things here as you bought them there?" "I will not, because what would my labour benefit me. I will sell them here dearer than I bought them there, that I may get some profit, to feed me, my wife, and children."³⁴

That public markets were established in various parts of England in this period, we learn from many documents. It is clear from Domesday-book that these markets paid a toll. In Bedfordshire, a toll de mercato is mentioned, which yielded seven pounds. The market at Taunton paid fifty shillings.³⁵ A market was established at Peterborough, with the privilege that no other was to be allowed within certain limits in its vicinity.³⁶

We shall state concisely a few customs as to our commercial navigation. At Chester, if ships should come there, or depart from it, without the king's leave, the king and comes were to have forty shillings for every man in the ship. If they came in violation of the king's peace, or against his prohibition, the ships, mariners, and their property, were forfeited to the king and comes. With the royal permission they might sell quietly what they had brought, but they were to pay to the king and his comes four-pence for every last. If the king's governor should order those having the skins of martens not to sell them before he had seen them, none were to disobey him, under a penalty of forty shillings. This port yielded forty-five pounds, and three timbres of marten-skins. In the same place false measure incurred a fine of four shillings; and for bad ale the offender paid as such, or else was placed on a dunghill.³⁷

At Southwark, no one took any toll on the strand, or the water, but the king. At Arundel, a particular person is named who took the custom paid by foreigners.³⁸ At Canterbury, a prepositus is stated to have taken the custom from foreign merchants, in certain lands there, which another ought to have

³⁴ MS. Tib. A. 3.³⁵ Domesday in loc.³⁶ Ingulf, 46.³⁷ Domesday in loc. ³⁸ Ibid.

received. At Lewes, it is mentioned, that whoever either bought or sold, gave the governor a piece of money.³⁹

Particular laws were made by the Anglo-Saxon government to regulate the manner of buying and selling. These laws had two objects in view: to prevent or detect theft; and to secure the due payment of the tax or toll which became due on such occasions.⁴⁰

In the ninth and tenth centuries, the Northmen were very enterprising in their navigation. They discovered Iceland and Greenland, and a more distant country, which they called Vinland, and which has been considered to have been some part of the North American continent.⁴¹

A remark may be added on their travelling and hospitality. It would seem that they travelled armed. We read of one journeying with his horse and spear; when he alighted, he gave his spear to his attendants.⁴²

Their hospitality was kind: on the arrival of a stranger, he was welcomed; they brought him water to wash his hands; they washed his feet, and for this purpose warm water was used; they wiped them with a cloth, and the host in one case cherished them in his bosom. We also read of warm wine administered to the new guest.⁴³

Hospitality was, however, dangerous in some degree, from its responsibility: if any one entertained a guest (cuman, literally a come-one) three nights in his own house, whether a trader, or any other person that had come over the boundary, and fed him with victuals, and the guest did any thing wrong, the host was to bring him to justice, or to answer for it.⁴⁴ By

³⁹ Domesday in loc.

⁴⁰ Several facts concerning the commerce of our ancestors have been occasionally mentioned in the preceding volume, as the intercourse between Offa and Charlemagne, Alfred's embassy to India, Æthelstan's connections with Europe, and Canute's letter, explaining the business which he had transacted with the Pope.

⁴¹ One of the voyages may be seen in Snorre, tom. 1. p. 303. 308. Torfæus has discussed this subject in a book on Vinland. Mallet has given an interesting chapter on the maritime discoveries of the Northmen, in his Northern Antiquities, vol. i. c. 11. p. 268 of the translation edited by Dr. Percy.

⁴² Bede, p. 233.

⁴³ Ibid. p. 234. 251. 257.

⁴⁴ Wilkins Leg. Sax. p. 9.

another law, a guest, after two nights' residence, was reckoned part of the family, and the owner of it was to be answerable for his actions.⁴⁵

If a shorn man travelled steorless, or vagrantly, hospitality might be given to him once, but he was to have leave of absence before he could be longer maintained.⁴⁶

Travelling was attended with some penal regulations: if a stranger in any part went out of the road, or through woods, it was a law that he should either shout aloud, or blow with a horn, on pain of being deemed a thief, and suffering as such.⁴⁷

It may be interesting to add in this part, a few observations on the decline of piracy in the North, because till this habit ceased, there could not be much traffic in these parts of the world.

Harald Harfragre had pursued the vikingr with a perseverance which promised to annihilate the custom, but on his death they flourished again. His son Eric, after his deposition, occupied his summers in depredations on the British islands, to maintain his associates.⁴⁸ In the reign of Edmund they again abounded, and made the Hebrides their resort.⁴⁹ On Eric's death, his sons passed their winters on the Orkney and Shetland isles, but devoted their summers to piracies on Scotland and Ireland.⁵⁰ The Northern kings sometimes sailed against them with fleets of punishment, to revenge aggressions on their own dominions. Thus Hakon, or Haco the Good, attacked eleven vikingr in Oresound, and hanged all those whom he met off Scania;⁵¹ but no combined system existed of repressing them. The practice, though from the rise of monarchies it was less frequent, had not yet excited the decided abhorrence of the Northern society; therefore Harald

⁴⁵ Wilkins Leg. Sax. p. 18.

⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 4.

⁴⁸ Snorre, p. 128.

⁵⁰ Tunc autem Orcades et Hialldtlandiam
suæ ditionis fecere Eiriki filii, census inde

⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 12.

⁴⁹ Ib.

percipientes, ibique per hyemes commorantes.
Per æstates autem mare occidentale piratica
infestim reddidere prædas agentes circa lit-
tora Scotiæ atque Hiberniæ. Snorre, p. 130.

⁵¹ Ib. p. 132.

Blaaland⁵² of Denmark, and Tryggvi, Gudrawd, and Harald Graffeld, three kings in Norway, indulged themselves in the practice.⁵³

As Olaf, the son of Tryggvi, was a sort of new Ragnar Lodbrog, in the activity, extent, and success of his marauding exploits, we may add a few circumstances of his life.

In 969, Tryggva, his father, suffered that death of violence⁵⁴ which usually closed the lives of those inhabitants of the North who stepped out of the path of industry into the adventures of heroism. His widow fled, pregnant with Olaf, and he was born on an island in the lake where she was concealed.⁵⁵ In his childhood, he was captured by Eastmen pirates, and was sold. He was afterwards purchased, and carried to Russia.⁵⁶ He was there brought up by Waldemar, who employed him in his army.

His favour declining, he quitted the Russian court, sailed to the Baltic, and, settling in the isle of Bornholm, he began the dismal profession of a vikingr.⁵⁷ After marrying a queen, on whose coast he landed, he commenced depredations on Scania and Gothland.⁵⁸ On her death, he extended the scene of his piracy; and Friesland, Saxony, and Flanders, mourned his visitations. From these, the unwearied sea-king turned towards England, and attacked Northumbria. As fortunate as enterprising, he made Scotland, the Hebrides, Ireland, Wales, Cumbria, and Normandy, feel the exertions of his valour.⁵⁹

Great and ardent spirits are liable to be impressed by the peculiar and the interesting. Olaf, anchoring once off the Scilly Isles, was converted to Christianity by the lessons of a hermit, whose age and seclusion had won from the rude population the fame of a seer.⁶⁰

⁵² Saxo Grammat. 180.

⁵³ Snorre, 135—177.

⁵⁴ Snorre, p. 177. Island. Ann. 2 Langb. 189.

⁵⁵ Snorre Saga, Olaf's Tryg. c. 1. p. 187.

⁵⁶ Snorre, 192, 193.

⁵⁷ Ib. 211—213.

⁵⁸ Ib. 215.

⁵⁹ Ib. 221, 222.

⁶⁰ Ib. 223, 224.

But although this warrior was following his piratical occupations amid the perils of storms and battles, his rigid heart was found penetrable by the shafts of love. A princess of Dublin had promised her chiefs to chuse a husband: they assembled, that she might select, and Olaf, though uninvited, joined the meeting. The movements of the tender passions are more eccentric than the wanderings of the heathy meteor. Clothed in rough garments, made to keep off rain, and wrapped in a hairy gown, the figure of Olaf was not the vision of a Cupid. But it was uncouth; and when Gyda's eye roved anxiously around, it arrested her notice: "Who are you?" "Olaf, a stranger." It was enough; and, if Snorre has not slandered the lady, love, instantaneous love, supplied every other explanation. With all the simplicity of rude nature, she exclaimed, "If you desire me for your wife, I will chuse you for my husband."

Olaf was, however, less impetuous or less philosophical than the lady. He had the caution to enquire who she was, her name, and parentage: she declared her birth, and Olaf contemplated her again. She was young and beautiful. At last, his tardy sensibility was kindled, and he became her husband, after conquering a rival.⁶¹

The reputation of Olaf roused the crafty and cruel mind of Hakon the Bad, who sent a favourite to discover and to circumvent him.⁶² But Hakon's disorderly passions had offended the chiefs whose families he had dared to violate, and they were in insurrection against him, when Olaf, led by his pretended friend, was approaching Norway. Hakon had fled before the chiefs when Olaf landed. The Norwegians eagerly placed the crown on his head, as a descendant of Harald Harfragre; and thus, in 995, Olaf became the monarch of Norway.⁶³

⁶¹ Snorre, 225, 226.

⁶² Ibid. 246.

⁶³ Ibid. 247—253. Hakon the Bad was killed in his hiding place. I take the date from the Isl. Ann. 190.

One of Olaf's most zealous occupations was, to convert Norway. He proceeded, with his desire, from province to province, and at last accomplished it, but by methods repugnant to that freedom of mind which is man's dearest birth-right, and as odious to the spirit and lessons of Christianity as the Paganism he abolished.⁶⁴

But although men of eminence, like Olaf, were continuing piracy, yet other habits were also growing up which were destined to destroy it.

The continuance of piracy might be expected to operate to the destruction of traffic; but wherever profit is seen to glitter, though danger guards every avenue, men will rush to grasp, though they perish in the effort. Rude as the Northmen were in manners, arts, and virtues, they wanted commodities from each other, which the productive industry or resources of any one place could not supply. Hence, skins for clothing were carried from Iceland to Norway.⁶⁵ Fish, cattle, and corn, their food, were often, from partial famines, required to be interchanged.⁶⁶ Hemp, or seal skins, or whale hides, were needed for ropes.⁶⁷ Captives were to be sold, and, of course, slaves to be purchased;⁶⁸ besides many articles of war and luxury.

The necessity of conveying from coast to coast the wanted commodities, turned a part of society into merchants: their places of resort became noted. Thus Tunsberg in Norway was much frequented by merchant ships, which came to it not only from the adjoining Vikia, and the more northern

⁶⁴ Snorre, 258 — 266. Among Olaf's Voyages, Snorre mentions his expedition to Vinland.

⁶⁵ Snorre, 176.

⁶⁶ Thus the Scald Eyvind, when a famine oppressed Norway, pecora emit familiæ sustentandæ necessaria. He sent his ships to purchase herrings, and for that purpose parted with his property and even with his arrows. Snorre, 186.

⁶⁷ See Ohther's Voyage.

⁶⁸ Lodinus was a rich man. Accidit quadam æstate ut mercatum profectus Lodinus navi quæ ejus unius erat, mercibus que dives, cursum ad Esthoniæm dirigeret, ubi per æstatem mercaturæ operam dedit. Dum celebrantur nundinæ ad quas comportatæ sunt merces omnis generis, ducti etiam multi homines venales. p. 256.

regions, but from Denmark and Saxony.⁶⁹ Birca in Sweden was another considerable emporium, in which vessels of merchandize came from all parts of the Baltic to acquire or to exchange the necessaries of life,⁷⁰ though its wealth and excellent harbours perpetually invited depredations of the vikingr.⁷¹ Our Dublin was in those days much frequented for trade.⁷²

It was auspicious to the future predominance of civilized habits that commerce became *honourable*. This circumstance in such an age of general warfare is as remarkable as beneficial. Perhaps the honour attached to commerce arose partly from the vikingr disposing of their spoils themselves, and partly from the necessity they felt for the objects of traffic. The merchants who ventured to sail through such an ambush of pirates, could not at first have been very numerous, and this rarity gave them increased value, and even dignity. In time also kings became their patrons.

Commerce was, however, in such credit, that Biorn prince of Westfold, the son of Harald Harfragre, became a merchant, and by his more warlike brothers was distinguished by that title.⁷³ Others also, of illustrious ancestry, were traders, and are mentioned for the affluence acquired by it.⁷⁴

Traffic being thus respectable, it is no wonder that another circumstance arose which operated to suppress piracy. This was the remarkable fact, that the two professions of pirate and merchant became in many instances to be blended. The same persons were at one time roaming to plunder, at another voyaging to trade: thus the people of Vikia are described as

⁶⁹ Tunsbergam plurimæ tunc mercatoriæ frequentabant naves tam ex Vikia et borealibus regionibus Norwegiæ quam ex Dania et Saxonia. Snorre, 115.

⁷⁰ Adam. Brem. 18, 19. Helmoldus, p. 9. Rembert in 1 Langb. 444.

⁷¹ Bircani etiam piratarum excursionibus quorum ibi magna copia est, sæpius impregnati. Adam. Brem. 18.

⁷² Hunc—jussit Hakonus Jarl Dublinum

ire mercatorem, id quod plurimis tunc temporis frequens erat. Snorre, 246.

⁷³ Biorno regi suæ etiam erant naves mercatoriæ quæ in comœatu exteras ad regiones, varias res ingentis pretii que pluraque necessaria videbantur ille advehebant. Illum igitur Navigatorem aut mercatorem (farmann eda Kaupmann) nominarunt ejus fratres. Snorre, 115.

⁷⁴ Snorre, 256, 257.

very commercial at the same time that many of them were vikings.⁷⁵ Thus the friend whom Hakon the Bad had selected to circumvent Olaf the son of Tryggva, had been long a pirate, but he was also a merchant, and was employed to visit Dublin in that capacity.⁷⁶ Thus Lodinus, though he had sometimes pirated, was a merchant, and in his mercantile character visited Estland.⁷⁷ Biorn, surnamed the Trader, had also practised piracy.⁷⁸ Thus the celebrated men of Jomsburg were as eminent for their commercial as for their depredatory activity. It was perhaps from their martial habits and equipments, arising from this alternation of pursuit, that merchants were enabled to combat with the pirates who attacked them.⁷⁹ They sometimes secured the success of their defensive exertions by voyaging in companies.

When we read that the pirates seized every moveable commodity where they invaded, and destroyed by fire the habitations, and growing produce of the field, when they could not remove it; that part of the inhabitants they slew on the spot, and carried away the others for slaves, sharing them by lot;⁸⁰ that of these captives they killed such as were too old for labour, and were therefore unsaleable;⁸¹ and that they exposed the others to the public market so unsparingly, that we find, at one time, a queen, pale, worn out with fatigue and sufferings, and squalidly clothed;⁸² and, on another

⁷⁵ *Ipsi enim Vikverienses in mercatura erant frequentes in Angliam et Saxoniam aut in Flandriam, aut in Daniam: quidam autem piraticam exercebant, hyemis in Christianorum terris transigentes.* Snorre Saga, Olaf's Helga, v. ii. p. 71.

⁷⁶ *Diu hic in piratica, interdum etiam in mercatura versatus.* Snorre, v. i. 246.

⁷⁷ *Sæpe ille in mercatura versabatur, interdum etiam in piratica.* Snorre, v. i. p. 256.

⁷⁸ *Biorne—in piratica parum frequens.* Snorre, 115.

⁷⁹ Rembert, who lived in the tenth century, mentions a conflict of this sort. 1 Langb. 444. Snorre also mentions a merchant ship

which endured a long conflict with a sea king, v. i. p. 215. So the Niala Saga says, "Piratis in mercatores tela jacentibus, prælium oritur, hique se pulchre tutantur." Celto Scand. p. 83. This was in the year 992.

⁸⁰ *Mare orientem versus sulcantes aggressi piratæ quidam Estenses homines captivos ducunt, bona diripiunt, occisis nonnullis, aliis quos inter se sortiti in servitutem abstractis.* Snorre, v. i. p. 192.

⁸¹ *Visus est Klercono æstate jam pro- vectior Thoralfus quam ut servus esse posset, nec laboribus satis idoneus; quare eum occidit.* Snorre, ib.

⁸² Snorre, p. 256.

occasion, a prince,⁸³ standing up to be purchased like cattle; when we see, that, from the plentiful supply, so low was the price, that Olaf the prince, who afterwards became king of Norway, and the invader of England, was sold for a garment;⁸⁴ and that a collection of boys were disposed of for a fine goat;⁸⁵ when we discover such things to be frequent, it seems absurd to look into the North for increased civilization.

And yet the seed leaves were beginning to emerge. The principle of improvement was in existence, and its vegetation, though slow, was incessant and effectual.

As soon as the vikingr stooped from the pursuit of sanguinary glory to collect profit from traffic, piracy, as a laudable custom, must have begun to be undermined. It must have received another fatal blow, as soon as agriculture became reputable. Though valour was still the pride of the day, many chiefs were perpetually arising of peaceable and unwarlike habits.⁸⁶ At the period of which we now speak, one Sigurd Syr, the king who educated Saint Olave of Norway, is particularly described to us as assiduous in his domestic occupations; who often surveyed his fields and meadows, and flocks and herds, and who was fond of frequenting the places where the handicraft labours were carried on.⁸⁷ His pupil, Olave, though in the first part of his life he became a sea-king, yet among other things was educated to manual arts as well as warlike exercises.⁸⁸ The sweets of landed property and peaceable occupations once experienced, the impulse of nature would urge the chiefs to favour husbandry, and to induce or to compel a part, ever increasing, of the Northern population to pursue the labours of the field in preference to war. Every regular and settled monarch favoured the new

⁸³ Snorre, 193.⁸⁴ Ib. 192.⁸⁵ Ib. 192.⁸⁶ Many of these are noticed in Snorre's *Heimskringla*.⁸⁷ Snorre's *Saga*, Olaf's *Helga*, c. 1. p. 1. and p. 31.⁸⁸ Arcum tractandi atque natandi imprimis peritus, in pilis et missilibus manu jaculandis eximius, ad artes fabriles a natura formatus, lynceis que oculis ad ea omnia quæ vel ipse vel alii fabricaverant. Snorre. *Olaf's Helga*, p. 1.

habit. Though the disorderly reigns which followed Harald Harfragre made his law against pirates almost obsolete, yet as soon as the government of Norway became established in Saint Olave, he revived the prohibition. He forbade all rapine.⁸⁹ He enforced his law so rigorously, that though the vikingr were the children of the most potent chiefs, he punished the offenders by the loss of life or limb; nor could prayers or money avert the penalty.⁹⁰ One of the Canutes was equally hostile to the habits of the vikingr. He prohibited all rapine and violence throughout his kingdom, and was highly displeased that Egill should have pirated in the summer. "In addicting yourself to piracy," said the king, "you have done an abominable thing. It is a Pagan custom, and I forbid it."⁹¹

It was indeed a custom which had been so familiar and so extolled, that its suppression was difficult. Olaf's severity against it excited an insurrection in his dominions.⁹² But though interested men struggled hard to uphold it, the good sense of mankind, awaking, though tardily, to their real interests, was combating against it. The benefits emanating to all from the cultivation of agriculture was announced in terror the most impressive, by the dismal famines which afflicted them. The augmented power, the more striking dignity, and the permanent happiness, accruing to the chiefs from a numerous clan of quiet peasantry, from the annual riches of tillage, and the mercantile importation of every other luxury; the lessons, though rude, of their new Christian clergy, the natural indolence and quietude of human nature, when permitted to follow its own tendencies, and when freed from the goading stings of want by the fruitful harvest of regular labour; must have alienated a large part of the Northern society from the practice of their ancestors, and must have made piracy, in an accumulating ratio, unpopular and dis-

⁸⁹ Snorre, t. i. p. 315.

⁹⁰ Snorre, ib. 316.

⁹¹ Knytlinga Saga, ap. Bartholin, 453.

⁹² Snorre, p. 317.

honourable. Human reason is never slow to amend its erring associations, when once the beam of light occurs to it, and nothing can more strongly paint the progressive change of manners, than the rapid degradation of the meaning of the word *vikingr*. At first designating a soldier, it became appropriated by pirates, when every warrior pirated. But now that the condemning voice of society was raising against rapine, the *vikingr* hastened fast to become a synonyme of the robber.⁹³ Poets, who often stamp the morals of ages, and who always influence the population of the day, began to brand it with that opprobrium, which, from their numbers, falls with the most deterring effect.⁹⁴

The improved feelings of society on this subject could not accumulate without communicating some contagion to the *vikingr* themselves. Though the novel sentiment might be unable to annihilate their evil habits, it awakened in their fierce bosoms a little sense of moral distinction; it compelled them to seek some shield of merit to avert that most terrible of all ills, the contempt and hatred of the society to which we belong. They began to feel that it was not honourable for a brave man to prey upon the peaceful merchant, who feeds and benefits his contemporaries, nor to murder the unoffending passenger whom various necessities enforce to roam. A new sort of *vikingr* then appeared, more suitable to the new-born morality of their feelings, and to the mental revolutions of the day. The peculiar and self-chosen task of these meritorious warriors, was to protect the defenceless navigator, and to seek and assail the indiscriminate plunderer.⁹⁵ The exact chronology of these new characters is not clear, but they seem reasonably to belong to the last age of piracy.

⁹³ The editors of the *Gunnlaugi Saga* give many examples of this, p. 298—300.

⁹⁴ Thus *Sighvatr*, the scald of *Olave*, sang:

Rapinæ ita pati isti homines suæ
Pænam debuere—
Scelestorum genus et nequam hominum,

Ille sic furta est amolitus.

Sexcentis jussit patriæ terræ
Custos, armis et gladiis præscidi
Piratis et hostibus capita regni.

Snorre, 316. t. ii.

⁹⁵ See the *Torsteins Saga*. ap. *Verelius*.
Herv. Saga, 47.

Their existence was, above all laws, efficacious in destroying piracy. They executed what society sighed for, and what wise kings enacted, and their appearance must have hastened the odium of the indiscriminate pirate, who became gradually hunted down as the general enemy of the human race. It is pleasing to read of this distinction in so many authors. Some men associated with the solemnity of an oath, that they would in piracy acquire money honourably, because they would exterminate the Berserkir and the malignant, and give safety to the merchant.⁹⁶ So others pursued piracy to deprive the plundering vikingr of the spoil they had torn from the husbandmen and merchants.⁹⁷ With the same character, Eric the Good is exhibited in the Knytlinga Saga.⁹⁸

By the laws of the pirate Hialmar, we see that they bound themselves to protect trade and agriculture, not to plunder women, nor to force them to their ships if unwilling, nor to eat raw flesh, which was the practice of the savage pirate.⁹⁹

On the whole, we may state, that after the tenth century piracy became discreditable, and that in every reign after that time it approached nearer to its extinction, until it was completely superseded by the influence of commerce, the firmer establishment of legal governments, improved notions of morality, and the experience of the superior comforts of social order, industry, and peaceful pursuits.

⁹⁶ Bua Saga, ap. Barth. 457.

⁹⁷ The Vatzdæla, ap. Barth. 458.

⁹⁸ Knytlinga Saga, ap. Barth. 452.

⁹⁹ Bartholin states these laws from the Orvar Oddr-Sogu, p. 456; and see the laws

of the sea-king Half, another of this band of naval chivalry, in Bartho. 455. Saxo also describes another set of heroes, who, in the following age, fought against the common pirates, l. 14. p. 259.

C H A P. XII.

*Their Money.*BOOK
VIII.

THE payments mentioned in Domesday-book are stated in pounds, shillings, pence, and farthings, exactly as our pecuniary calculations are made. Twenty shillings constitute a pound, and a shilling is composed of twelve pence. The same computation occurs elsewhere. Elfric, in his translation of Exodus, c. xxi. v. 10. adds of his own authority, "They are twelve scyllinga of twelve pennies;" and in the monies mentioned in the *Historia Eliensis*, edited by Gale, we find numerous passages which ascertain that a pound consisted of twenty shillings. I will refer to a few: three hides were sold by a lady to an abbot for a hundred shillings each. The owner is afterwards said to have come to receive the fifteen pounds. When seven pounds and a half only had been paid, the ealdorman asked the abbot to give the lady more of her purchase-money. At his request, the abbot gave thirty shillings more; thus, it is added, he paid her nine pounds.¹ On another occasion, the money agreed for was thirty pounds. One hundred shillings were received, and twenty-five pounds were declared to remain due.²

The Saxon money was sometimes reckoned by pennies, as the French money is now by livres. Thus, in one charta, three plough-lands are conveyed for three thousand pennies. In another, eighty acres were bought for three hundred and eighty-five pennies. In another, one thousand four hundred and fifty pennies occur.³

The name for money which is oftenest met with in the charters is the mancus. On this money we have one curious

¹ 3 Gale x. Script. p. 473.

² Ibid. 477; and see 485, 488.

³ MS. Chartas of the late Mr. Astle, No. 7. No. 22. No. 28.

passage of Elfric; he says, five pennies make one shilling, and thirty pennies one mancus.⁴ This would make the mancus six shillings. The passage in the laws of Henry the First intimates the same.⁵ Two passages in the Anglo-Saxon laws seem to confirm Elfric's account of the mancus being thirty pennies; for an ox is valued at a mancus in one, and at thirty pence in another.⁶

But there is an apparent contradiction in five pennies making a shilling, if twelve pennies amounted to the same sum. The objection would be unanswerable, but that, by the laws of Alfred, it is clear that there were two sorts of pennies, the greater and the less; for the violation of a man's borg was to be compensated by five pounds, *mærra peninga*, of the *larger* pennies.⁷

The mark is sometimes mentioned; this was half a pound, according to the authors cited by Du Fresne;⁸ it is stated to be eight ounces by Aventinus.⁹

The money mentioned in our earliest law consists of shillings, and a minor sum called *scætta*. In the laws of Ina, the *pening* occurs, and the *pund* as a weight. In those of Alfred the *pund* appears as a quantity of money, as well as the shilling and the penny, but the shilling is the usual notation of his pecuniary punishments. In his treaty with the Danes, the half mark of gold, and the mancus, are the names of the money; as is the *ora* in the Danish compact with Edward. In the laws of Ethelstan, we find the *thrymsa*, as well as the shilling and the penny; the *scætta* and the *pund*. The shilling, the penny, and the pound, appear under Edgar. The *ora* and the *healf-marc* pervade the Northumbrian laws. In the time of Ethelred, the pound is frequently the amount of

⁴ Hickes, Diss. Ep. 109.

⁵ *Debent reddi secundum legem triginta solidi ad Manbotam, id est, hodie 5 mancæ.* Wilk. p. 265. So. p. 249.

⁶ Wilk. p. 66, and 126. Yet this pas-

sage is not decisive, because the other accompanying valuations do not correspond.

⁷ Ibid. 35.

⁸ Du Fresne, Gloss. ii. p. 437.

⁹ Ann. Bol. lib. vi. p. 524.

the money noticed. The shilling and penny, the healf-marc, and the ora, also occur.¹⁰

The Anglo-Saxon wills that have survived to us mention the following money: In the archbishop Ælfric's will we find five pundum, and fifty mancusan of gold.¹¹ In Wynflæd's will, the mancæs of gold, the pund, the healfes pundes wyrthne, and sixty pennega wyrth, are noticed. In one part she desires that there should be put, in a cup which she bequeaths, healf pund penega, or half a pound of pennies. In another part she mentions sixteen mancusum of red gold; also thirty penega wyrth.¹²

In Thurstan's will, twelf pund be getale occurs. In Godric's we perceive a mark of gold, thirteen pounds, and sixty-three pennies.¹³ In Byrhtic's will, sixty mancos of gold and thirty mancys goldes are mentioned; and several things are noticed, as of the value of so many gold mancus. Thus, a bracelet of eighty mancysan goldes, and a necklace of forty mancysa; a hand secs of three pounds is also bequeathed, and ten hund penega.¹⁴

In Wulfar's will, the mancus of gold is applied in the same way to mark the value of the things bequeathed, and also to express money.¹⁵ The mancus of gold is the money given in Elfhelm's will; in Dux Ælfred's, pennies; in Æthelwyrð, both pennies and the pund occur. In Æthelstan's testament we find the mancosa of gold, the pund of silver, the pund be getale, and pennies.¹⁶

In the charters we find pennies, mancusa, pounds, shillings, and sicli, mentioned. In one we find one hundred sicli of the purest gold;¹⁷ and in another, four hundred sicli in pure silver.¹⁸ In a third, fifteen hundred of shillings in silver are mentioned, as if the same with fifteen hundred sicli.¹⁹ The

¹⁰ See Wilkins, *Leges Anglo-Sax.* passim.

¹¹ MS. Cott. Claud. B. 6. p. 103.

¹² Hickes, *Gram.* Præf.

¹³ Hickes, *Diss.* Ep. 29, 30.

¹⁴ *Ib.* p. 51. ¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Sax. Dict.* App.

¹⁷ The late Mr. Astle's MS. Charters, No. 10.

¹⁸ App. to Bede, p. 770.

¹⁹ MS. Claud. C. 9.

shilling also at another time appears as if connected with gold, as seventy shillings of auri obrizi.²⁰ Once we have two pounds of the purest gold.²¹ The expressions of pure gold, or the purest gold, are often added to the mancos.

That the pound was used as an imaginary value of money, is undoubted. One grant says, that an abbot gave in money quod valuit, what was of the value of one hundred and twenty pounds.²² Another has four pound of lic-wyrthes feos,²³ which means money or property agreeable to the party receiving it. We read also of fifteen pounds of silver, gold, and chattels;²⁴ also sixty pounds in pure gold and silver.²⁵ Sometimes the expression occurs, which we still use in our deeds, "One hundred pounds of *lawful money*."²⁶

As no Anglo-Saxon gold coins have reached modern times, though of their silver coinage we have numerous specimens, it is presumed by antiquaries that none were ever made. Yet it is certain that they had plenty of gold, and it perpetually formed the medium of their purchases and gifts. My belief is, that gold was used in the concerns of life, in an uncoined state,²⁷ and to such a species of gold money I would refer such passages as these: fifty "mancussa asodenes gold," "sexies viginti marcarum auri pondo," "appensuram novem librarum purissimi auri juxta magnum pondus Normannorum," "eighty mancusa auri purissimi et sex pondus electi argenti," "duo uncias auri." I think that silver also was sometimes passed in an uncoined state, from such intimations as these: "twa pund mere hwites seolfres," and the above-mentioned "sex pondus electi argenti." The expressions that pervade Domesday-book imply, in my apprehension, these two species of money, the coined and the uncoined. Seventy libras pensatas, like two uncias auri, are obviously money by

²⁰ Mr. Astle's Charters, No. 28. b.

²¹ Ibid. 25.

²² MS. Claud. C. 9.

²³ Heming. Chart. 180.

²⁴ 3 Gale, 410.

²⁵ Heming. Chart. 8.

²⁶ Ingulf, p. 35.

²⁷ One coin has been adduced as a Saxon gold coin. See Pegge's Remains. But its pretensions have not been admitted.

weight. But money ad numerum, or arsuram, I interpret to be coined money; also the pund be getale. The phrases, sex libras ad pensum et arsuram et triginta libras arsas et pensatas, appear to me to express the indicated weight of coined money. The words arsas and arsuram I understand to allude to the assay of coin in the mint.

Whether the mancus was, like the pund, merely a weight, and not a coin, and was applied to express, in the same manner as the word pound, a certain quantity of money, coined or uncoined, I cannot decide; but I incline to think that it was not a coin. Indeed there is one passage which shews that it was a weight “duas bradiolas aureas fabrefactas “quas pensarent xlv mancusas.”²⁸ I consider the two sorts of pennies as the only coins of the Anglo-Saxons above their copper coinage, and am induced to regard all their other denominations of money as weighed or settled quantities of uncoined metal.²⁹

That money was coined by the Anglo-Saxons in the octarchy, and in every reign afterwards, is clear from those which remain to us. Most of them have the mint-master's name. It does not appear to me certain, that they had coined money before their invasion of England, and conversion.

It was one of Ethelstan's laws, that there should be one coinage in all the king's districts, and that no mint should be outside the gate. If a coiner was found guilty of fraud, his hand was to be cut off, and fastened to the mint smithery.³⁰ In the time of Edgar, the law was repeated, that the king's coinage should be uniform; it was added, that no one should refuse it, and that it should measure like that of Winchester.³¹ It has been mentioned of Edgar, that finding the value of

²⁸ Heming. Chart. p. 86.

²⁹ It is the belief of an antiquarian friend, who has paid much attention to this subject, that even the Saxon scyllinga was a nominal

coin; as he assures me no silver coin of that value has been found which can be referred to the Saxon times.

³⁰ Wilk. Leg. Sax. p. 59. ³¹ Ibid. p. 78.

the coin in his reign much diminished by the fraud of clipping, he had new coins made all over England.

We may add a few particulars of the coin which occur in Domesday-book. Sometimes a numeration is made very similar to our own, as £.11:13:4. Sometimes pounds and sometimes shillings are mentioned by themselves. In other places, some of the following denominations are inserted:

Una marka argenti,

Tres markas auri,

Novem uncias auri,

c solidos et unam unciam auri,

xxiv libras et unciam auri,

xx libras et unam unciam auri, et un. marcum,

xxv libras ad pond.

l libras appretiatas,

xiv libras arsas et pensatas, et v libras ad numerum,

cvi libras arsas et pensatas, et x libras ad numerum,

xxii libras de alb. denariis, ad pensum hujus comitis,

xvi libras de albo argento.

xlvii libras de albo argento xvi denariis minus,

xxiii lib. denar. de xx in ora,

xv lib. de xx in ora,

iii solid. de den. xx in ora, et xxvi denar. ad numerum,

v oris argenti,

i denarium,

i obolum,

i quadrantem,

viii libras et xx denar.³²

³² The meaning of arsas and arsuram, as applied to money, is explained in the Black Book of the Exchequer to be the *assay* of money. The money might be sufficient in number and weight, yet not in quality. It by no means followed that twenty shillings, which constituted a pound weight, was in fact a pound of silver, because copper or other metal might be intermixed when there was no examination. For this reason, the

books say that the bishop of Salisbury instituted the arsuram, in the reign of Henry the First. It is added, that if the examined money was found to be deficient above sixpence in the pound, it was not deemed lawful money of the king. Liber Niger Scacarii, cited by Du Cange, Gloss. 1. p. 343. The bishop cannot, however, have invented the arsuram in the reign of Henry, because Domesday-book shews that it was known in the

It seems reasonable to say, that such epithets as *purissimi auri*, and *æsodenes gold*, that is, melted gold, refer to money paid and melted.

But if the Saxon silver coins were only the larger and smaller pennies, what then was the *scyllinga*? In the translation of Genesis, the word is applied to express the Hebrew shekels.³³ In the New Testament, thirty pieces of silver, which the Gothic translates by the word *slanbrin*, or silver, the Saxon version calls *scyllinga*.³⁴ The etymology of the word *scyllinga* would lead us to suppose it to have been a certain quantity of uncoined silver; for, whether we derive it from *rcylan*, to divide, or *rcæle*, a scale, the idea presented to us by either word is the same; that is, so much silver cut off, as in China, and weighing so much.

I would therefore presume the *scyllinga* to have been a quantity of silver, which, when coined, yielded five of the larger pennies, and twelve of the smaller.

The Saxon word *scætt* or *sceat*, which occurs in the earliest laws as a small definite quantity of money, is mostly used to express money generally. I would derive it from *rcæat*, a part or division; and I think it meant a definite piece of metal originally in the uncoined state. The *sceat* and the *scyllinga* seem to have been the names of the Saxon money in the Pagan times, before the Roman and French ecclesiastics had taught them the art of coining.

The value of the *scæt* in the time of Æthelbert would appear, from one sort of reasoning, to have been the twen-

time of the Conqueror. In Domesday-book it appears that the king had this right of assay only in a few places. Perhaps the bishop, in a subsequent reign, extended it to all money paid into the exchequer.

An intelligent friend has favoured me with the following extract from Domesday: "Totum manerium T. R. E. et post valuit xl libras. Modo similiter xl lib. Tamen reddit l lib. ad arsuram et pensum, quæ valent lxx lib." Domesday, vol. i. fo. 15. b.

This passage seems to express, that £.65 of coined money was only worth £.50 in pure silver, according to the assay of the mint. Whether this depreciation of the coin existed in the Saxon times, or whether it followed from the disorders and exactions of the Norman conquest, I have not ascertained.

³³ See Genesis, in Thwaite's Hepta-teuch.

³⁴ Matthew, xxvii. 3.

tieth part of a shilling. His laws enjoin a penalty of twenty scyllinga for the loss of the thumb, and three scyllinga for the thumb-nail. It is afterwards declared that the loss of the great toe is to be compensated by ten scyllinga, and the other toes by half the price of the fingers. It is immediately added, that for the nail of the great toe thirty sceatta must be paid to bot.³⁵

Now as the legislator expresses that he is estimating the toes at half the value of the fingers, and shews that he does so in fixing the compensation of the thumb and the great toe, we may infer, that his thirty sceattas for the nail of the great toe were meant to be equal to half of the three scyllinga which was exacted for the thumb-nail. According to this reasoning, twenty sceatta equalled one scyllinga.

About three centuries later, the scætta appears somewhat raised in value, and to be like one of their smaller pennies; for the laws of Æthelstan declare thirty thousand scætta to be cxx punda.³⁶ This gives two hundred and fifty sceatta to a pound, or twelve and an half to a scyllinga. Perhaps, therefore, the sceat was the smaller penny, and the pening, properly so called, was the larger one.

We may be curious to enquire into the etymology of the pening. The word occurs for coin in many countries. In the Franco-theotisc, it occurs in Otfrid as pfening;³⁷ and on the continent one gold pfenning was declared to be worth ten silver pfenning.³⁸ It occurs in Icelandic, in the ancient Edda, as penning.³⁹

The Danes still use penge as their term for money or coin; and if we consider the Saxon penig as their only silver coin, we may derive the word from the verb punian, to beat or

³⁵ Wilkins, Leg. Anglo-Sax. p. 6.

³⁶ Ibid. p. 72.

³⁷ It is used by Otfrid, l. 3. c. 14. p. 188.

³⁸ I. Alem. prov. c. 299. cited by Schilter in his Glossary, p. 657.

³⁹ Ægis drecka, ap. Edda Sæmundi, p. 168.

knock, which may be deemed a term applied to metal coined, similar to the Latin, *cudere*.⁴⁰

That the Anglo-Saxons did not use coined money before the Roman ecclesiastics introduced the custom, is an idea somewhat warranted by the expression they applied to coin. This was *mynet*, a coin, and from this, *mynetian*, to coin, and *mynetere*, a person coining. These words are obviously the Latin *moneta* and *monetarius*; and it usually happens that when one nation borrows such a term from another, they are indebted to the same source for the knowledge of the thing which it designates.

An expression of Bede once induced me to doubt if it did not imply a Saxon gold coin. He says that a lady, foretelling her death, described that she was addressed in a vision by some men, who said to her, that they were come to take with them the *aureum numisma* (meaning herself) which had come thither out of Kent. This complimentary trope Alfred translates by the expressions, *gyldene mynet*.⁴¹

The passage certainly proves, that both Bede and Alfred knew of gold coins; and it certainly can be hardly doubted, that when gold coins circulated in other parts of Europe, some from the different countries would find their way into England. The use of the word *aureos*, in the *Historia Eliensis*, implies gold coin;⁴² and that coins called *aurei* were circulated in Europe, is clear from the journal of the monks who travelled from Italy to Egypt in the ninth or tenth century. In this they mention that the master of the ship they sailed in charged them six *aureos* for their passage.⁴³ But whether these *aurei* were those coined at Rome or Constantinople, or were the coins of Germany or France, or whether England really issued

⁴⁰ Schilter has quoted an author who gives a similar etymology from another language, "Pænings nomine pecunia tantum numerata significat, a pāna, quod est cudere, signare" Gloss. Teut. p. 657.

⁴¹ Bede, l. 3. c. 8. and Transl. p. 531.

⁴² L aureos, p. 485. x aureos, ib. lxxx aureis, p. 484. c aureos, p. 486.

⁴³ See first volume of this history, p. 319.

similar ones from its mint, no authority, yet known, warrants us to decide.

That the pennies of different countries varied in value, is proved by the same journal. Bernard, its author, affirms that it was then the custom of Alexandria to take money by weight, and that six of the solidi and denarii, which they took with them, weighed only three of those at Alexandria.⁴⁴

The silver penny was afterwards called, in the Norman times, an esterling, or sterling; but the time when the word began to be applied to money is not known.⁴⁵

There has been a variety of opinions about the value of the Saxon pound.⁴⁶ We have proof, from Domesday, that in the time of the Confessor it consisted of twenty solidi or shillings. But Dr. Hickes contends that the Saxon pound consisted of sixty shillings,⁴⁷ because, by the Saxon law in Mercia, the king's were gild was one hundred and twenty pounds, and amounted to the same as six thegns, whose were was twelve hundred shillings each.⁴⁸ And certainly this passage has the force of declaring that the king's were was seven thousand two hundred shillings, and that these were equivalent to one hundred and twenty pounds; and according to this passage, the pound in Mercia contained sixty shillings. Other authors⁴⁹ assert that the pound had but forty-eight shillings.

We have mentioned that a scyllinga, or shilling, consisted of five greater pennies, or of twelve smaller ones. But in the time of the Conqueror the English shilling had but four pennies: "15 solz de solt Engleis co est quer deners."⁵⁰ This

⁴⁴ See first volume of this history, p. 319.

⁴⁵ The laws of Edward I. order the penny of England to be round, without clipping, and to weigh thirty-two grains of wheat, in the middle of the ear. Twenty of these were to make an ounce, and twelve ounces a pound. Spelm. Gloss. p. 241.

⁴⁶ The Welsh laws of Hoel dda use punt or pund as one of their terms for money. They have also the word ariant, which

means literally silver, and ceiniawg, both these seem to imply a penny. See Wotton's Leges Wallicæ, p. 16. 20, 21. 27. Their word for a coin is bath.

⁴⁷ Hickes, Dissert. Ep. p. 111.

⁴⁸ Wilkins, Leg. Anglo-Sax. p. 72.

⁴⁹ As Camden, Spelman, and Fleetwood.

⁵⁰ Wilkins, Leg. Anglo-Sax. p. 221. In the copy of these laws in Ingulf, p. 89. the expression is quer *bener* deners, or four better pennies.

passage occurs in the Conqueror's laws. It has been ingeniously attempted to reconcile these contradictions, by supposing that the value of the shilling was that which varied, and that the pound contained sixty shillings of four pennies in a shilling, or forty-eight shillings of five pennies in a shilling.⁵¹ To which we may add, twenty shillings of twelve pence in a shilling. These different figures, respectively multiplied together, give the same amount of two hundred and forty pennies in a pound. Yet though this supposition is plausible, it cannot be true, if the shilling was only a nominal sum, like the pound, because such variations as these attach to coined money, and not the terms merely used in numeration.

The styca, the helfling, and the feorthling, are also mentioned. The styca and feorthling are mentioned in a passage in Mark. "The poor widow threw in two stycas, that is, "feorthling peninges, or the fourth part of a penny." The hælfing occurs in Luke: "Are not two sparrows sold for a hælfinge?"⁵² We cannot doubt that these were copper monies.

The thrymsa is reckoned by Hickes to be the third part of a shilling, or fourpence.⁵³ Yet the passage which makes the king's were thirty thousand sceatta, compared with the other, which reckons it as thirty thousand thrymsa,⁵⁴ seems to express that the thrymsa and the scætta were the same.

On this dark subject of the Anglo-Saxon coinage, we must however confess, that the clouds which have long surrounded it have not yet been removed. The passages in Alfred's and in the Conqueror's laws imply that there were two sorts of pennies, the mærra or benier pennies, and the smaller ones. We have many Anglo-Saxon silver coins of these species; but no others.

⁵¹ Clarke's preface to Wotton's *Leges Wallicæ*.

⁵² Mark, chap. xii. 42.

⁵³ Luke, chap. xii. 6.

⁵⁴ Hickes, *Diss. Ep.*

⁵⁵ Wilkins, *Leg. Anglo-Sax.* p. 72. and p. 71.

Some ecclesiastical persons, as well as the king, and several places, had the privilege of coining. In the laws of Ethelstan, the places of the mints in his reign are thus enumerated:

“ In Canterbury there are seven myneteras; four of the king’s, two of the bishop’s, and one of the abbot’s.

“ In Rochester there are three; two of the king, and one of the bishop.

“ In London eight,

“ In Winchester six,

“ In Lewes two,

“ In Hastings one,

“ Another in Chichester,

“ In Hampton two,

“ In Wareham two,

“ In Exeter two,

“ In Shaftesbury two,

“ Elsewhere one in the other burghs.”⁵⁶

In Domesday-book we find these monetarii mentioned:

Two at Dorchester,

One at Bridport,

Two at Wareham,

Three at Shaftesbury.

Each of these gave to the king twenty shillings and one mark of silver when money was coined.

The monetarii at Lewes paid twenty shillings each.

One Suetman is mentioned as a monetarius in Oxford.

At Worcester, when money was coined, each gave to London fifteen shillings for cuneis to receive the money.

At Hereford there were seven monetarii, of whom one was the bishop’s. When money was renewed, each gave eighteen shillings, pro cuneis recipiendis; and for one month from the day in which they returned, each gave the king twenty shillings, and the bishop had the same of his man. When the king went into the city, the monetarii were to make as many

⁵⁶ Wilkins, Leg. Anglo-Sax. p. 59.

pennies of his silver as he pleased. The seven in this city had their sac and soc. When the king's monetarius died, the king had his heriot; and if he died without dividing his estate, the king had all.

Huntingdon had three monetarii, rendering thirty shillings between the king and comes.

In Shrewsbury the king had three monetarii, who, after they had bought the cuneos monetæ, as other monetarii of the country, on the fifteenth day gave to the king twenty shillings each; and this was done when the money was coining.

There was a monetarius at Colchester.

At Chester there were seven monetarii, who gave to the king and comes seven pounds extra firmam, when money was turned.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ For these, see Domesday-book, under the different places.

C H A P. XIII.

Their Chivalry.

T H E R E is no evidence that the refined and enthusiastic spirit of gallantry, which accompanied chivalry in its perfect stage, prevailed among the Anglo-Saxons: but that chivalry, in a less polished form, and considered as a military investiture, conferred with religious ceremonies, by putting on the belt and sword, and giving the knight a peculiar dignity among his countrymen;—that this kind of chivalry existed in England before the Norman conquest, the authorities adduced in this chapter will perhaps ascertain.

C H A P.
XIII.

In the reign of Edward the Confessor, Hereward, a noble Anglo-Saxon youth, distinguished himself by his daring valour and eccentricity. As his character is highly romantic, and affords a remarkable instance of the Anglo-Saxon chivalry, I will state the main incidents of his life, from the plain and temperate narration of his contemporary, who was the Conqueror's secretary.

“ His father was Leofric, lord of Brunne, in Lincolnshire, a nobleman who had become very illustrious for his warlike exploits. He was a relation of the great earl of Herford, who had married the king's sister.

“ Hereward was the son of this Leofric and his wife Ediva. He was tall and handsome, but too warlike, and of an immoderate fierceness of mind. In his juvenile plays and wrestlings, he was so ungovernable, that his hand was often raised against every one, and every one's hand against him. When the youths of his age went to wrestling and such other sports, unless he triumphed over all, and his playfellows conceded to him the laurel of victory, he very often extorted by his sword what he could not gain by his muscular strength.

BOOK
VIII.

“The youths of his neighbourhood complaining of this conduct, his father’s anger was excited against him. Leofric stated to King Edward the many intolerable tricks that had been practised even upon himself, and his excessive violence towards others. Upon this representation, the Confessor ordered him into banishment.

“Hereward, thus exiled, went fearlessly to Northumbria, thence to Cornwall, thence to Ireland, and afterwards to Flanders; and every where most bravely carrying himself, he soon obtained a glorious and magnificent reputation.

“In every danger intrepidly pressing forward, and happily escaping; in every military conflict always throwing himself on the bravest, and boldly conquering; it was doubtful whether he was more fortunate or brave. His victories over all his enemies were complete, and he escaped harmless from the greatest battles.

“Becoming so illustrious by his military successes, his valiant deeds became known in England, and were sung through the country. The dislike of his parent, relatives, and friends, was changed into the most ardent affection.

“In Flanders he married a noble lady, Turfrida, and had by her a daughter, who lately married (I am transcribing Ingulf) an illustrious knight, a great friend to our monastery, and lord of Depyng and the paternal inheritance of Brunne and its appurtenances.

“The mother of Turfrida coming to England with her husband, with his permission forsook all earthly pomp, and became a nun in our monastery of Croyland.

“Hereward returning to his native soil with his wife, after great battles, and a thousand dangers frequently dared and bravely terminated, as well against the king of England, as the earls, barons, prefects, and presidents, which are yet sung in our streets (says Ingulf), and having avenged his mother with his powerful right hand, at length, with the king’s pardon, obtained his paternal inheritance, and ended his days

in peace, and was very lately buried near his wife in our monastery.”¹

CHAP.
XIII.

It is obvious, from the connection of this singular character with Croyland monastery, that no one could furnish us with more authentic particulars of him than Ingulf, who lived at the time, and was a monk in the same place. I will add a few more circumstances, which the writer has recorded concerning him.

It was in Flanders, that Hereward heard that the Normans had conquered England; that his father was dead; that the Conqueror had given his inheritance to a Norman; and that his mother's widowhood was afflicted by many injuries and distresses. Transported with grief at the account, he hastened with his wife to England, and, collecting a body of her relations, he thundered on the oppressors of his mother, and drove them from her territory.

At this period of the narration, the important passage² occurs, which gives such complete evidence to the Anglo-Saxon chivalry.

“ Considering then, that he was at the head of very brave
“ men, and commanded some *milites*, and had not yet been
“ legally bound with the belt, according to the military cus-
“ tom, he took with him a very few tyros of his cohort, to be
“ legitimately consociated with himself to warfare, and went
“ to his uncle, the abbot of Peterborough, named Brand, a
“ very religious man (as I have heard from my predecessor,
“ my lord Ulketul, abbot, and many others), much given to
“ charity, and adorned with all the virtues; and having first
“ of all made a confession of his sins, and received absolu-
“ tion, he very urgently prayed that he might be made a
“ legitimate *miles*. For it was the custom of the English,
“ that every one that was to be consecrated to the legitimate
“ *militia*, should, on the evening preceding the day of his

¹ Ingulf, p. 67, 68.

² Ingulf, p. 70.

“ consecration, with contrition and compunction, make a
 “ confession of all his sins to a bishop, an abbot, a monk, or
 “ some priest; and, devoted wholly to prayers, devotions,
 “ and mortifications, should pass the night in the church; in
 “ the next morning should hear mass, should offer his sword
 “ on the altar, and after the Gospel had been read, the priest
 “ having blessed the sword, should place it on the neck of
 “ the miles, with his benediction. Having communicated at
 “ the same mass with the sacred mysteries, he would after-
 “ wards remain a legitimate miles.” He adds, this custom
 of consecrating a miles, the Normans regarded as abomina-
 tion, and did not hold such a one a legitimate miles, but
 reckoned him a slothful equitem and degenerate quiritem.

From the preceding account we collect these things,

1st, That a man might take up arms, head warriors, fight
 with them, and gain much military celebrity, and yet not
 thereby become a legitimate miles.

2d, That he could not reputably head milites, without being
 a legitimate miles.

3d, That to be a legitimate miles was an honorary distinc-
 tion, worthy the ambition of a man who had previously been
 of such great military celebrity as Hereward.

4th, That to be a miles, an express ceremony of consecra-
 tion was requisite.

5th, That the ceremony consisted of a confession and abso-
 lution of sins, on the day preceding the consecration; of
 watching in the church, all the previous night, with prayers
 and humiliations; of hearing mass next morning; of offering
 his sword on the altar, of its being blessed by the priest, of
 its being then placed on his neck; and of his afterwards
 communicating. He was then declared a legitimate miles.

6th, The mode above described, was the Anglo-Saxon
 mode; but there was another mode then in existence: for
 it is expressly mentioned, that the Normans did not use,
 but detested, the custom of religious consecration.

7th, That a legitimate miles was invested with a belt and a sword.

CHAP.
XIII.

Another passage, which alludes to the Anglo-Saxon chivalry, is in Malmsbury, in which he expressly declares, that Alfred made Athelstan a miles. He says, that Alfred, seeing Athelstan to be an elegant youth, prematurely made him a miles, investing him with a purple garment, a belt set with gems, and a Saxon sword, with a golden sheath.³

The investiture of the belt, alluded to in the account of Hereward, and in Malmsbury's account of Athelstan's knight-hood, is also mentioned by Ingulf, on another occasion. Speaking of the famous Saxon chancellor Turketul, who died in 975, he says, that he had, among other relics, the thumb of St. Bartholomew, with which he used to cross himself in danger, tempest, and lightning. A dux Beneventanus gave this to the emperor, when he girded him with the first military belt.⁴ The emperor gave it to the chancellor. An author who died in 1004, says, "Whoever uses the belt of his knight-hood (militiæ), is considered as a knight (miles) of his dignity."⁵

That there was a military dignity among the Saxons, which they who wrote in Latin expressed by the term Miles, is, I think, very clear, from other numerous passages. There are many grants of kings and others extant to their militibus. Thus Edred, "cuidam meo ministro ac militi," "meo fideli ministro ac militi," "cuidam meo militi."⁶ The word miles cannot here mean simply a soldier. So to many charters we find the signatures of several noblemen characterized by this title.⁷ Bede frequently uses the term in passages and with connections which shew that he meant to express dignity by

³ Malmsbury, p. 49.

⁴ Ingulf, p. 51.

⁵ Abb. Flor. in Can. c. 51. Quisquis militiæ suæ cingulo utitur, dignitatis suæ miles adscribitur.

⁶ MS. Claud. B. 6. So an archbishop gives land, Heming. Chart. 191. 210. 234.

⁷ To a charta of Edward Confessor, five sign with the addition of Miles. MS. Claud. B. 6. Eleven sign with Miles to a charta of Ethelwulph. Text. Roff.

it. We are at least certain that this Anglo-Saxon translator believed this, because he has always interpreted the expression, when it has this signification, by a Saxon word of peculiar dignity.⁸ Ingulf mentions several great men, in the Anglo-Saxon times, with the addition of miles, as an augmentation of their consequence; and once introduces a king styling a miles his magister.⁹ Domesday-book mentions several milites as holding lands.

But although the Anglo-Saxons had a military dignity, which their Latin writers called Miles, I do not think that the word *cniht* was applied by them to express it.

It has been shewn, in the chapter on their infancy and education, that a youth was called a *cniht*. By the same term they also denoted an attendant.¹⁰ In Cedmon it occurs a few times; but it seems to have been used to mean youths. Speaking of Nabochodonossor, he says,

He commanded his gerefas,
out of the miserable relics of the Israelites,
to seek some of the youth
that were most skilled
in the instruction of books.
He would, that the *cnihtas*
should learn the craft
to interpret dreams.¹¹

Then they there found
for their sagacious lord
noble *cnihtas*.¹²

* Bede:

alium de militibus,
cum his—militibus,
milite sibi fidelissimo,
prefato milite,
comitibus ac militibus,
de militia ejus juvenis,

Alfred:

otherne cyninges thegn,
mid his thegnum,
his thegne—getreoweste,
foresprecenan his thegne,
his geforum, cyninges thegnum,
sum geong thos cyninges thegn.

p. 511, 525, 539, 551, 590.

⁸ Ingulf, p. 6, 14, 20, 25, 63. This use of the word miles is one of Hickes's reasons for his attack on Ingulf; an attack which I think ill founded. I feel every gratitude to Hickes for his labours on the Northern languages; but I cannot conceal that I think him mistaken on several very important points of the Saxon antiquities.

¹⁰ Gen. xxi. 65. Luke, vii. 7. and xii. 45.

¹¹ Cedmon, p. 77.

¹² Ibid.

Speaking of the adoration of the image of Dara, he says,

CHAP.
XIII.

The cnihtas of a good race
acted with discretion,
that they the idol
would not as their god
hold and have.¹³

Then was wrath
the king in his mind.
He commanded an oven to heat
to the destruction of the lives of the cnihtas.¹⁴

The word has no military distinction in these passages.

Ælfric, in his glossary, interprets cniht-had by pueritia, pubes; and to oth cniht-hade he puts pube tenus.

There are, however, instances of grants to cnihtas, which would induce a suspicion, that the word was gradually advancing, from the expression of a youth or an attendant, to signify a more dignified sort of dependent. A Saxon will has, "Let men give my cnihtas and my stewardas witas forty punda." Ælfhelm, in his will, says, "I give to my wife and my daughter half the land at Cunnington, to be divided, except the four hides that I give to Æthelric and Alfwold, and the half hide that I give to Osmaer, my cniht." Æthelstan Ætheling, in his will, expresses, "I give my father, King Æthelræd, the land at Cealhtun, except the eight hides that I have given to Ælmor, my cniht." "And I give to Æthelwin, my cniht, the sword that he before gave me."¹⁵ There are three grants of land from Oswald, archbishop, to cnihts; and it is important to observe, he does not call them his cnihts, or any other person's cnihts, but he calls them sumum cnihte, some cniht, or a cniht, as if cniht had been a definite and well-known character. His words are, "One hide at Hymeltun to sumum cniht, whose name is Wulfgeat;" "two hides, all but sixty acres, to sumum cniht, whose name is Æthelwold;" "—— hides to

¹³ Cedmon, p. 79.

¹⁴ Ibid. p. 80.

¹⁵ See these wills in the appendix to the Saxon dictionary.

“ sumum cniht, whose name is Osulf, for God's love, and for
“ our peace.”¹⁶

In the admonitions to different orders of men, printed with the Anglo-Saxon laws, there is a passage which gives cniht and cnihthood in a meaning rather different from those which have been stated: “That will be a rightlike life, that a cniht
“ continues in his cnihtthade till he marries rightly a maiden
“ wife, and haves her then afterwards, and no other while she
“ lives.”¹⁷ Cnihtthade here implies chastity.

Perhaps cniht originally signified a boy, afterwards a servant who was not a slave. It may have been then applied to denote a military attendant; and in this sense it gradually superseded the word thegn, which I think was the Saxon term for the dignity implied by the term miles. A knight, even in the full chivalric meaning, was a military servant of somebody, either of the king, the queen, a favourite lady, or some person of dignity. In a state very similar to this are the cnihtas in the Saxon wills. They appear to us, in like manner, in a rank far above a servant in the Saxon gild scipes. Of these fraternities, cnihts constituted a part, and are distinctly mentioned, though with a reference to some lord to whom they were subordinate; a situation which seems best explained, by supposing them free and respectable military dependents.
“ If a cniht draw a sword, the lord shall pay one pound, and
“ let the lord get it when he may; and all the gild-scipe
“ shall help him, that he may get his money. And if a
“ cniht wounds another, his lord shall avenge it. And if
“ a cniht sits within the ascent, let him pay one syster of
“ honey; and if he has any foot-stool, let him pay the
same.”¹⁸ In another gild-scipe, after each of the gild has been directed to bring two sesters of malt, it is added, “And
“ let every cniht bring one, and a sceat of honey.”¹⁹

¹⁶ Heming. Chart.¹⁷ Wilkins, Leg. Sax. p. 150.¹⁸ See the Gild-scipe in Hickes's Diss. Ep. p. 21.¹⁹ Ibid. p. 22.

It occurs again, as a known and recognised character, in an act of a slave's emancipation, "Thereto is witness, William of Orchut, and Ruold the cniht, and Osbern fadera, and Umfreig of Tettaborn, and Alword the portreeve, and Johan the cniht."²⁰

It occurs again as the designation of a known and reputable character in society, in a Saxon charta about land; for after many witnesses have been mentioned by name, these words follow: "And many a good cniht besides these."²¹

The term and the character of cniht was, therefore, in the Anglo-Saxon period, rising fast to its full station of dignity.

There is a character represented in the illuminations and drawing of a Saxon MS. which I think answers to the situation of a cniht, in its more advanced meaning. When a king is sitting on his throne, he is drawn as holding his sceptre. Close by him, and as a part of his public dignity, a person is standing, holding his sword and shield. This figure occurs several times in the drawings of Genesis, in Claud. B. 4. A similar character occurs near a king in the battle. The king is fighting; an armed attendant, apparently a young man, is fighting near him. I consider these to represent what was originally called a king thegn, or miles, and afterwards a cniht; and such a character I consider Lilla to have been, who received the assassin's blow that was intended for Edwin.²²

Tournaments appear to have been used in the age of the Anglo-Saxons, for they are expressly mentioned in the laws of the emperor of Germany, Henry the First. It was in 934 that he published institutions concerning them.²³ By

²⁰ See the Gild-scipe in Hickes's Diss. Ep. p. 18.

²¹ Hickes, Gram. Pref. p. xxi.

²² See the 1st vol. of this work, p. 140.

²³ Goldastus, in his Constitutiones Imperiales, v. ii. p. 41. has the Henrici I. Augusti leges hastiludiales sive de torne-

mentis, which, he says, were latae Gottingæ in Saxonia, 938. The author of the Aquila Saxonica, p. 27, says it should be 934. These leges are also mentioned in Fabricius Hist. Sax. i. p. 122. The Aquila Saxonica quotes also at length other statuta et privilegia of these games, made at Magdeburg. This imperial document entirely

these he direct, that the equestrian games, to be fought by the usual weapons, should be solemnly exhibited in the empire by those of noble descent. All blasphemers and traitors, they who had deprived widows or virgins of their honour or property; the perjured, the coward, the homicide, and the sacrilegious; they who had robbed the orphan, who had attacked the unsuspecting, who had harassed society, and injured the commercial; the adulterer and the merchant; were prohibited from partaking of the diversions. If they presumed to present themselves, their horses were taken away, and they were to be thrown on the septum.²⁴

The city or place appropriated for the exercises was made free to all except heretics, thieves, and traitors, during the time of the games, and for fourteen days preceding and afterwards. The area of the games was to be hedged round: every combatant was to be first confessed and absolved; every count was to bring with him but six companions; a baron four, a knight three, others only two, unless they maintained them at their own expence.²⁵

destroys the opinion, that tournaments originated in 1066, which Dufresne gives, 3 Gloss. Med. 1147. Wittichind, who addressed his history to the grand-daughter of Henry, expressly says of this emperor, "In exercitiis quoque ludi tanta eminentia superabat omnes ut terrorem cæteris ostentaret,"

p. 15. Previous to this, Nithard mentions, that some French gentlemen fought in play on horseback.

²⁴ Goldastus ubi supra.

²⁵ Aquila Saxonica, p. 28, 29, where the other provisions, established for the regulation of the tournaments, may be seen.

C H A P. XIV.

Their Superstitions.

THE belief, that some human beings could attain the power of inflicting evils on their fellow creatures, and of controlling the operations of nature, existed among the Anglo-Saxons, but did not originate with them. It has appeared in all the regions of the globe; and from its extensive prevalence we may perceive that the human mind, in its state of ignorance and barbarism, is a soil well adapted to its reception and cultivation. It is not true that fear first made a deity; but it cannot be doubted that fear and hope are the parents of superstition.

C H A P.
XIV.

Life has so many evils which the uninstructed mind can neither prevent nor avert, and encourages so many hopes which every age and condition burn to realize, that we cannot be astonished to find so large a portion of mankind the willing prey of impostors, practising on their credulity by threats of evil and promises of good, greater than the usual course of nature would dispense.

The superstition of magic and witchcraft prevailed even in Greece and Rome, before the Saxons are known to have had an historical existence. The general diffusion of the fond mistake forbids us to derive the later impostures from those which preceded; but as every thing that was popular among the Romans must have scattered some effects on the nations with whom they had intercourse, we will glance at the opinions which the masters of the world admitted on this delusive subject.

It is amusing to read of Apuleius, who flourished under the Antonines, and who, though born in Africa, was educated at Athens, that he was accused of magic arts, and of having obtained a rich wife by his incantations. In his Metamor-

phoseon we have a curious picture of the witchcraft which was believed to exist in the ancient world. One of his characters is described as a *saga*, or witch,¹ who could lower the sky, and raise the manes of the dead. She is stated to have transformed one lover into a beaver, another into a frog, and another into a ram; to have condemned a rival wife to perpetual gestation; to have closed up impreguably all the houses of a city, whose inhabitants were going to stone her; and to have transported the family of the authors of the commotion to the top of a distant mountain.

Another lady of similar taste is mentioned to have been a *maga*, mistress of every sepulchral song, who, by twigs, little stones, and such like petty instruments, could submerge all the light of the world in the lowest 'Tartarus, and into ancient chaos; who could turn her lovers that displeased her into stones or animals, or entirely destroy them.²

Apuleius afterwards gives us a description of one of her achievements. In the dead of the night, as two friends are sleeping in a room, the doors burst open with great fury; the bed of one is overturned upon him; two witches enter, one carrying a light, the other a sponge and a sword. This stabs her sleeping faithless lover, plunges the weapon up to its hilt in his throat, receives all the blood in a vessel; that not a drop might appear, and then takes out his heart. The other applied her sponge to the wounds, saying, "Sponge! sea-born! beware of rivers!" The consequence was, that though he waked, and travelled as well as ever, yet when on his journey he approached a river, and proceeded to drink at it, his wounds opened, the sponge flew out, and the victim fell dead.

Apuleius himself was a great student of magic. The chief seat of all these wonders is declared to have been Thessaly; and so popular was the notion of witchcraft among those nations whom in our youth we are taught almost exclusively

¹ Apul. Metamorph. l. i. p. 6.

² Ibid. p. 21.

to admire, that even philosophers thought that they accounted sufficiently for the miracles of the Christian legislator, by referring them to magic.

We will consider the Anglo-Saxon superstitions under the heads of their witchcraft, their charms, and their prognostics.

Their pretenders to witchcraft were called *wicca*, *scin-læca*, *galdor-cræftig*, *wiglær*, and *morthwyrtha*. *Wiglær* is a combination from *wig*, an idol or a temple, and *lær*, learning, and may have been one of the characters of the Anglo-Saxon idolatry. He was the wizard, as *wicca* was the witch. *Scin-læca* was a species of phantom or apparition, and was also used as the name of the person who had the power of producing such things: it is, literally, a shining dead body. *Galdor-cræftig* implies one skilled in incantations; and *morthwyrtha* is, literally, a worshipper of the dead.

Another general appellation for such personages was *dry*, a magician.

The laws notice these practices with penal severity. The best account that can be given of them will be found in the passages proscribing them.

“ If any *wicca*, or *wiglær*, or false swearer, or *morthwyrtha*,
“ or any foul, contaminated, manifest *horcwenan* (whore,
“ *quean* or strumpet), be any where in the land, man shall
“ drive them out.”³

“ We teach that every priest—shall extinguish all heathen-
“ dom, and forbid *wilweorthunga* (fountain-worship), and
“ *licwiglunga* (incantations of the dead), and *hwata* (omens),
“ and *galdra* (magic), and man-worship, and the abomina-
“ tions that men exercise in various sorts of witchcraft, and
“ in *frithsplottum*, and with elms and other trees, and with
“ stones, and with many other phantoms.”⁴

From subsequent regulations, we find that these practices were made the instruments of the most fatal mischief; for penitentiary penalties are enjoined if any one should destroy

³ Wilk. Leg. Anglo-Sax. p. 53.

⁴ Ibid. p. 83.

another by wicce cræfte ; or if any should drive sickness on a man ; or if death should follow from the attempt.⁵

They seem to have used philtres ; for it is also made punishable if any should use witchcraft for another's love, or should give him to eat or to drink with magic.⁶ They were also forbid to wiglian by the moon.⁷ Canute renewed the prohibitions. He enjoined them not to worship the sun or the moon, fire or floods, wells or stones, or any sort of tree ; not to love wiccecræft, or frame death-spells, either by lot or by torch ; nor to effect any thing by phantoms.⁸ From the Pœnitentiale of Theodore we also learn, that the power of letting loose tempests was also pretended to.⁹

Another name for their magical arts was unlybban wyrce, literally, destructive of life. The penitence is prescribed for a woman who kills a man by unlybban. One instance of their philtres is detailed to us. A woman resolving on the death of her step-son, or to alienate from him his father's affection, sought a witch, who knew how to change minds by art and enchantments. Addressing such a one with promises and rewards, she enquired how the mind of the father might be turned from the child, and be fixed on herself. The magical medicament was immediately made, and mixed with the husband's meat and drink. The catastrophe of the whole was the murder of the child ; and the discovery of the crime by the assistant, to revenge the stepmother's ill-treatment.¹⁰

The charms used by the Anglo-Saxons were innumerable. They trusted in their magical incantations for the cure of disease,¹¹ for the success of their tillage,¹² for the discovery of lost property,¹³ and for the prevention of casualties.¹⁴ Specimens of their charms for these purposes still remain to us.

⁵ Wilk. Leg. Ang. Sax. p. 93. ⁶ Ibid.

⁷ MS. Tib. A. 3.

⁸ Wilkins, p. 134.

⁹ Spelm. Concil. 155.

¹⁰ 3 Gale's Script. p. 439.

¹¹ For incantations to cure various diseases, see Wanley's Catalogue of Saxon MSS. p. 44, 115, 231, 232, 234, 305.

¹² For charms to make fields fertile, see Wanley, p. 98, 225.

¹³ For charms to find lost cattle, or any thing stolen, see Wanley, p. 114, 186.

¹⁴ For amulets against poison, disease, and battle, see also Wanley.

Bede tells us, that "many, in times of disease (neglecting the sacraments) went to the erring medicaments of idolatry, as if to restrain God's chastisements by incantations, phylacteries, or any other secret of the demoniacal arts."¹⁵

Their prognostics, from the sun, from thunder, and from dreams, were so numerous, as to display and to perpetuate a most lamentable debility of mind. Every day of every month was catalogued as a propitious or unpropitious season for certain transactions. We have Anglo-Saxon treatises which contain rules for discovering the future fortune and disposition of a child, from the day of his nativity. One day was useful for all things; another, though good to tame animals, was baleful to sow seeds. One day was favourable to the commencement of business; another to let blood; and others wore a forbidding aspect to these and other things. On this day you was to buy, on a second to sell, on a third to hunt, on a fourth to do nothing. If your child was born on such a day, it would live; if on another, its life would be sickly; if on another, he would perish early. In a word, the most alarming fears, and the most extravagant hopes, were perpetually raised by these foolish superstitions, which tended to keep the mind in the dreary bondage of ignorance and absurdity, which prevented the growth of knowledge, by the incessant war of prejudice, and the slavish effects of the most imbecile apprehensions.¹⁶

The same anticipations of futurity were made by noticing on what day of the week or month it first thundered, or the new moon appeared, or the new-year's day occurred. Dreams likewise had regular interpretations and applications; and thus life, instead of being governed by the councils of wisdom, or the precepts of virtue, was directed by those solemn lessons of gross superstition, which the most ignorant peasant of our days would be ashamed to avow.

¹⁵ Bede, l. iv. c. 27. ¹⁶ See especially MS. Tiberius, A. 3. and Bede's works on these subjects.

C H A P. XV.

*Their Funerals.*BOOK
VIII.

THE northern nations, at one period, burnt their dead. But the custom of interring the body had become established among the Anglo-Saxons, at the æra when their history began to be recorded by their Christian clergy, and was never discontinued.

Their common coffins were wood; the more costly were stone. Thus a nun who had been buried in a wooden coffin was afterwards placed in one of stone.¹ Their kings were interred in stone coffins;² they were buried in linen,³ and the clergy in their vestments.⁴ In two instances mentioned by Bede, the coffin was provided before death.⁵ We also read of the place of burial being chosen before death, and sometimes of its being ordered by will.⁶

With the common sympathy of human nature, friends are described as attending, in illness, round the bed of the diseased. On their departure, we read of friends tearing their clothes and hair.⁷ One who died, is mentioned to have been buried the next day.⁸ As Cuthbert, the eleventh bishop from Augustin, obtained leave to make cemeteries within cities,⁹ we may infer that the more healthful custom, of depositing the dead at some distance from the habitations of the living, was the general practice; but afterwards it became the custom of England to bury the dead in the churches. The first restriction to this practice was the injunction that none should be so buried, unless it was known that in his life he had been acceptable to God. It was afterwards ordered that no corpse should be deposited in church, unless of an

¹ Bede, l. iv. c. 19. ² Ibid. c. 4.³ Ibid. c. 19.⁴ Ibid. p. 261.⁵ Ibid. l. v. c. 5. and l. iv. c. 11.⁶ 3 Gale Script. 470.⁷ Eddius, p. 64.⁸ Bede, p. 302.⁹ Dugd. Mon. i. p. 25.

ecclesiastic, or a layman so righteous as to deserve such a distinction. All former tombs in churches were directed to be made level with the pavement, so that none might be seen: and if in any part, from the number of the tombs, this was difficult to be done, then the altar was to be removed to a purer spot, and the occupied place was to become merely a burying ground.¹⁰

Some of their customs at death may be learnt from the following narrations. It is mentioned in Dunstan's life, that Æthelfleda, when on her death-bed, said to him, "Do thou, early in the morning, cause the baths to be hastened, and the funeral vestments to be prepared, which I am about to wear; and after the washing of my body, I will celebrate the mass, and receive the sacrament; and in that manner I will die."¹¹

The sickness, death, and burial of archbishop Wilfrid, in the eighth century, is described with these particulars. On the attack of his illness, all the abbots and anchorites near were unwearied in their prayers for his recovery. He survived, with his senses; and power of speech returned, for a year and a half. A short time before his death, he invited two abbots and six faithful brethren to attend him, and desired them to open his treasure chest with a key. The gold, silver, and precious stones therein were brought out, and divided into four parts, as he directed. One of these he ordered to be sent to the churches at Rome, as a present for his soul; another part was to be divided among the poor of his people; a third he gave to some monasteries, to obtain therewith the friendship of the kings and bishops; and the fourth he destined to those who had shared in his labours, and to whom he had not given lands.

¹⁰ Wilk. Leg. Anglo-Sax. p. 179. p. 84.

¹¹ MSS. Cleop. B. 13. This life has been printed in the Acta Sanctorum for May, from a MS. brought from the Vedastine monastery at Rome. This MS. differs from the Cotton MS. in some particulars. It

has the preface, which the Cotton MS. wants; but it has not two pages of the conclusion, which are in the Cotton MS. In the body of the Roman MS. there are forty-two hexameters which are not in the Cotton MS.

After his death, one of the abbots spread his linen garments on the ground. The brethren laid his body on it, washed it with their hands, and put on his ecclesiastical dress. Afterwards they wrapped it in linen, and, singing hymns, they conducted it in a carriage to the monastery. All the monks came out to meet it; none abstained from tears and weeping. They received it with hymns and chantings, and deposited it in the church which he had built.¹²

One of the nobles who attended the king at his Easter court having died, it is mentioned that his body was carried to Glastonbury; and the king ordered some of the bishops, earls, and barons, to attend the bier thither with honour.¹³

When the body of an alderman was taken to the monastery at Ramsay to be buried, a numerous assemblage from the neighbourhood met to accompany his exequies.¹⁴

The saul-sceat, or the payment of the clergy on death, became a very general practice. No respectable person died or was buried without a handsome present to some branch or other of the ecclesiastical establishment.

Nothing can more strongly express the importance and necessity of this custom, than that several of their gilds seem to have been formed chiefly with a view to provide a fund for this purpose.

It appears in all the wills. Thus Wynflæd, for her saul-sceat, gave to every one of the religious, at the places she mentions, a mancus of gold; and to another place, half a pound's worth, for saul-sceat. She adds a direction to her children, that they will illuminate for her soul.

Byrhtic, for his soul and his ancestors, gave two sulings of land by his will, and a similar present, with thirty gold mancys, for his wife's soul and her ancestors.¹⁵ Wulfaru bequeaths to Saint Peter's minster, for his "miserable soul," and for his

¹² Eddius, p. 89.

¹³ 3 Gale Script. p. 395.

¹⁴ 3 Gale Script. p. 428.

¹⁵ Hickes, Diss. Ep. 51.

ancestors, a bracelet, a patera, two golden crosses, with garments and bed-clothes.¹⁶

CHAP.
XV.

A dux who flourished in the days of Edgar and Æthelred, not only gave an abbot some valuable lands, in return for his liberal hospitality, but also several others, with thirty marks of gold, and twenty pounds of silver, two golden crosses, two pieces of his cloak, set with gold and gems in valuable workmanship, and other things, that, if he fell in battle, his body might be buried with them.¹⁷

A dux in Alfred's days directed 100 swine to be given to a church in Canterbury, for him and for his soul; and the same to Chertsey abbey. The same dux directed 200 peninga to be paid annually from some land to Chertsey abbey, for the soul of Alfred.¹⁸

So Æthelstan the ætheling gave to St. Peter's church, at Westminster, land which he had bought of his father for 200 mancusan of gold, by weight five pounds of silver, and other land, which he had purchased for 250 gold mancus by weight; and the land which his father released to him for both their souls: he makes other bequests to other religious places.¹⁹

¹⁶ Hickes, Diss. p. 54.

¹⁷ 3 Gale Script. 494.

¹⁸ Test. Ælf. App. Sax. Dict.

¹⁹ App. Sax. Dict.

HISTORY OF THE
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ANGLO-SAXONS.

BOOK IX.

Their Landed Property.

CHAP. I.

Their Husbandry.

THE agricultural state may have been coeval with the pastoral, in the climates of the East, where nature is so profuse of her rural gifts, that cultivation is scarcely requisite ; but in the more ungenial regions of the north of Europe, where the food of man is not to be obtained from the earth, without the union of skill and labour, the pastoral state seems to have been the earliest occupation of uncivilized man. While this taste prevailed, agricultural attentions were disreputable and despised, as among the ancient Germans. But when population became more numerous and less migratory, husbandry rose in human estimation and use, until at length it became indispensable to the subsistence of the nation who pursued it.

The Anglo-Saxons cultivated the art of husbandry with some attention. The articles which they raised from the

CHAP.
I.

earth, and the animals which they fed, have been mentioned in the chapter on their food. A few particulars of their practical husbandry need only be mentioned here.

They used hedges and ditches to separate their fields and lands;¹ and these were made necessary by law; for if a free-man broke through a hedge, he had to pay six shillings.² A ceorl was ordered to keep his farm inclosed both winter and summer; and if damage arose to any one who suffered his gate to be open, and his hedge to be broken down, he was subjected to legal consequences.³

They had common of pasture attached to the different portions of land which they possessed; and they had other extensive districts laid out in meadow. Every estate had also an appropriated quantity of wood. In Domesday-book, the ploughed land, the meadow, the pasture, and the wood, are separately mentioned, and their different quantities estimated.

They sowed their wheat in spring.⁴ It was a law, that he who had twenty hides of land should take care that there should be twelve hides of it sown when he was to leave it.⁵

They had ploughs, rakes, sickles, scythes, forks, and flails, very like those that have been commonly used in this country.⁶ They had also carts or waggons. Their wind-mills and water-mills are frequently mentioned, in every period of their history.

Their woods were an object of their legislative attention. If any one burnt or cut down another's wood without permission, he was to pay five shillings for every great tree, and five pennies for every other, and thirty shillings besides, as a penalty.⁷ By another law, this offence was more severely punished.⁸

They were careful of the sheep. It was ordered by an

¹ These appear in most of the boundaries described in the Saxon grants. Hedges are mentioned in Domesday. A *nemus ad sepes faciendum* occurs in Middlesex, fo. 127.

² Wilk. Leg. 4.

³ Ibid. p. 21.

⁴ Bede, p. 244.

⁵ Wilk. Leg. p. 25.

⁶ Their drawings in their MSS. shew a great resemblance between the Saxon instruments and those still used in the northern counties of England.

⁷ Wilk. p. 37.

⁸ Ibid. p. 21.

express law, that these animals should keep their fleece until midsummer, and that the value of a sheep should be one shilling until a fortnight after Easter.⁹

CHAP.

I.

There are some curious delineations in a Saxon calendar, which illustrate some of their agricultural labours.¹⁰

In January are men ploughing with four oxen; one drives, another holds the plough, and another scatters seeds.

In February men are represented as cutting or pruning trees, of which some resemble vines.

In March one is digging, another is with a pick-axe, and a third is sowing.

In April three persons are pictured as sitting and drinking, with two attendants; another is pouring out liquor into a horn; and another is holding a horn to his mouth.

In May a shepherd is sitting; his flocks are about, and one man has a lamb in his arms; other persons are looking on.

In June some are reaping with a sickle, and some putting the corn into a cart. A man is blowing a horn while they are working.

In July they are felling trees.

In August they are mowing.

In September is a boar-hunting.

In October is hawking.

In November a smithery is shewn.

In December two men are thrashing, others are carrying the grain in a basket; one has a measure, as if to ascertain the quantity; and another, on a notched stick, seems to be marking what is measured and taken away.

In the Saxon dialogues already quoted, the ploughman gives this account of his duty:

“ I labour much. I go out at day-break, urging the oxen to the field, and I yoke them to the plough (the syl). It is not yet so stark winter that I dare keep close at home, for

⁹ Wilk. Leg. p. 25, 23.

¹⁰ Cott. MS. Tib. B. 5. See them copied

in Strutt's Hord. Angl. v. i. tab. x. xi
xii.

fear of my lord; but the oxen being yoked, and the share and cultro fastened on, I ought to plough every day one entire field, or more. I have a boy to threaten the oxen with a goad, who is now hoarse through cold and bawling. I ought also to fill the binns of the oxen with hay, and water them, and carry out their soil." He adds, "It is a great labour, because I am not free."

In the same MSS. we have this statement of a shepherd's and a cowherd's duty. "In the first part of the morning I drive my sheep to their pasture, and stand over them in heat and in cold with dogs, lest the wolves destroy them. I lead them back to their folds, and milk them twice a day; and I move their folds, and make cheese and butter; and I am faithful to my lord." The other says, "When the ploughman separates the oxen, I lead them to the meadows; and all night I stand watching over them, on account of thieves; and again, in the morning, I take them to the plough, well fed and watered."

Some circumstances may be selected from their grants, which illustrate the customs and produce of an Anglo-Saxon farm. "I give food for seventy swine in that woody allotment which the countrymen call Wulferdinleh, and five waggons full of good twigs, and every year an oak for building, and others for necessary fires, and sufficient wood for burning."¹¹

A noble lady ordered out of her lands a yearly donation of forty ambra of malt, an old ram, four wethers, two hundred and forty loaves, and one weight of bacon and cheese, and four fother of wood, and twenty hen-fowls."¹²

In Ina's laws, ten hides were to furnish ten vessels of honey, three hundred loaves, twelve ambra of Welsh ale, thirty of clear ale, two old rams, ten wethers, ten geese, twenty hens, ten cheeses, an ambra full of butter, five salmon, twenty pounds weight of fodder, and an hundred eels."¹³

¹¹ Bede, App. 770.¹² Hicke's Diss. Ep. 10.¹³ Wilk. Leg. Sax. p. 25.

Another gives ten mittas of malt, five of grits, ten mittas of the flour of wheat, eight gammons, sixteen cheeses, and two fat cows; and in Lent eight salmon.¹⁴

Offa, in 785, grants some land, with permission to feed swine in the wood of Andreda; and another district to cut wood for building or for burning; and also wood sufficient to boil salt; and the fishing of one man; with one hundred loaded waggons, and two walking carts, every year.¹⁵

We frequently find salt-pans, or places to boil salt in, conveyed, as, "with four vessels for the boiling of salt," and "with all the utensils and wells of salt."¹⁶

Fisheries were frequently given with land. To three plough lands in Kent a fishery on the Thames is added.¹⁷ Æthelstan gives a piece of land for the use of taking fish.¹⁸ So forty acres, with fishing, were given on the condition of receiving every year fifteen salmon.¹⁹ So half of a fishery is given to a monastery, with the buildings and tofts of the fishermen.²⁰

A vineyard is not unfrequently mentioned in various documents. Edgar gives the vineyard situate at Wecet, with the vinedressers.²¹ In Domesday-book, vineyards are noticed in several counties.

A wolf-pit is mentioned in one of the boundaries of an estate.²²

In Domesday we frequently meet with parks. Thus, speaking of Rislepe in Middlesex, it adds, "There is a park (parcus) of beasts of the wood."²³ At St. Alban's, and Ware, in Herts, similar parks are mentioned, and in other places.

Gardens also occur several times in Domesday. Eight cotarii and their gardens²⁴ are stated in the manor of Fuleham in Middlesex. And we may remark that Fulham still abounds

¹⁴ 3 Gale Hist. R. 410.

¹⁵ Astle's MS. Charters, No. 4.

¹⁶ Heming. Chart. Wig. p. 144. p. 48.

¹⁷ Thorpe Regist. 20.

¹⁸ Heming. Chart. p. 111.

¹⁹ Heming. Chart. p. 171.

²⁰ 3 Gale x. Script. p. 405.

²¹ MS. Claud. C. 9. p. 116.

²² 3 Gale, p. 520.

²³ Domesday, 129. b. ²⁴ Ibid. 127. b.

with market gardeners. A house with its garden is mentioned in the burg of Hertford.²⁵

Two or three intimations occur in Domesday of the increasing conversion of pasture into arable land. Thus at Borne in Kent, "a pasture from which strangers have ploughed six acres of land."²⁶

We have many contracts extant of the purchases of land by the Anglo-Saxons, from which we may expect to gain some knowledge of the price of land. But this source of information is by no means sufficient to form an accurate criterion, because we cannot tell the degree of cultivation, or the quality of the land transferred; and also because many of the grants seem to have been rather gifts than sales, in which the consideration bears little proportion to the obvious value. A few of the prices given may however be stated.

- 1 hyde and a field for 100 shillings.
- 3 hydes for £.15.
- 10 hydes and two mills for 100 aureos.
- 7 hydes and an half for 200 aureos.²⁷
- 6 cassatorum for 3 pundus argenti.
- 10 manentium for 31 mancosas.
- 20 manentium for 10 libris argenti.
- 2 mansiones for 20 manecusis auri probatissimi.²⁸
- 15 manentes for 1500 solidis argenti.
- 5 manentium for 10 libras inter aurum et argentum.
- 5 manentium for 150 mancas de puro auro.
- 8 mansas for 90 mancusa of purest gold.
- 10 mansas for 30 mancusas of pure gold.
- 8 mansas for 300 criseis mancusis.²⁹

It is obvious from this short specimen of the sums mentioned in their documents, that no regular estimate can be formed of the usual price of their land.

By the exorcisms to make fields fertile which remain, we

²⁵ Domesday, 132. ²⁶ Ibid. p. 9.

²⁷ 3 Gale, p. 483. 485. 480. 486.

²⁸ Heming. Chart. p. 69, 70. 222. 230.

²⁹ MS. Claud. C. 9.

may perceive that our superstitious ancestors thought that they could produce abundant harvests by nonsensical ceremonies and phrases. They who chuse may see a long one in Calig. A. 7. It is too long and too absurd to be copied. But we may recollect, in justice to our ancestors, that Cato the censor, has transmitted to us a recipe as ridiculous.

The course of nature, in the revolutions of the seasons, has suffered no essential change since the deluge, which human records notice. We may therefore presume that the seasons in the Anglo-Saxon period resembled those which preceded and have followed them. Bede calls October Winterfylleth, because winter begins in this month. And we have a description of Anglo-Saxon winter from a disciple of Bede: "The
" last winter far and wide afflicted our island horribly, by its
" cold, its frosts, and storms of rain and wind."³⁰

To give some notion of the state of the atmosphere and of the seasons in these times, it may not be uninteresting to mention some of the years which were more remarkable for the calamities of the weather which attended them.

A. D. 763-4. This winter was so severe, for its snow and frost, as to have been thought unparalleled. The frost lasted from the first of October to February. Most of the trees and shrubs perished by the excessive cold.³¹

793. A great famine and mortality.³²

799. Violent tempest, and numerous shipwrecks in the British ocean.³³

807-8. A very mild and pestilential winter.³⁴

820. From excessive and continual rains, a great mortality of men and cattle ensued. The harvest was spoilt: Great inundations prevented the autumnal sowing.³⁵

821. A dreadful winter followed. The frost was so long and severe, that not only all the smaller rivers, but even the

³⁰ 16 Mag. Bib. p. 88.

³¹ Simeon Dunelm, p. 105. Ann. Astron.
ap. Ruberi, p. 18. Sigeb. Gembl. p. 551.

³² Sim. Dun. p. 112. ³³ Ibid. 115.

³⁴ Adelmi Benedict. p. 409.

³⁵ Ibid. p. 421.

largest in Europe, as the Seine, the Elbe, the Rhine, and the Danube, were so frozen, that, for above thirty days, waggons passed over them as if over bridges.³⁶

823. The harvests devastated by hail. A terrible pestilence among men and cattle.³⁷

824. A dreadful and long winter. Not only animals, but many of the human species, perished by the intenseness of the cold.³⁸

832. This year began with excessive rains. A frost succeeded so sudden and intense, that the iced roads were nearly impassable by horses.³⁹

834. Great storms and excessive falls of rain.⁴⁰

851. Severe famine on the continent.⁴¹

869. Great famine and mortality in England.⁴²

874. A swarm of locusts laid waste the provinces of France. A famine so dreadful followed, that, in the hyperbolical language of the writers, nearly a third part of the population perished.

875. A long and inclement winter, succeeded with unusual falls of snow. The frost lasted from the first of November to the end of March.⁴³

913. A severe winter.

956. A very mortal pestilence.⁴⁴

976. A severe famine in England. A frost from 1st November to end of March.

986. A great mortality amongst cattle in England.⁴⁵

987. A dreadful flux and fever in England.⁴⁶

988. A summer of extreme heat.

989. Great inundations. Very hot summer, unhealthy and

³⁶ Adelmi Benedict. p. 422. Ann. Astron. p. 46.

³⁷ Adel. B. 425. Sigeb. Gemb. 561.

³⁸ Ann. Fuld. 6. Bouquet's Recueil, p. 208. Annales apud Ruberi, p. 49.

³⁹ Annales Ruberi, 56. Adel. Bened. 463.

⁴⁰ Annales Ruberi, 58.

⁴¹ Sigeb. Gembl. apud Pistorium, p. 565.

⁴² Asser, p. 20.

⁴³ Aimoini de gestis Fran. p. 489. Sigeb. Gembl. 569.

⁴⁴ Regino Chron. p. 568. 74. 79.

⁴⁵ Sax. Chron. 123. 125. Sim. Dun. 160. Sig. Gemb. 587.

⁴⁶ Flor. Wig. and Sim. Dun. 161.

unfruitful. Great drought and famine; much snow and rain; and no sowing.⁴⁷

CHAP.
I.

1005. A great and dreadful famine in England.

1006. The same over all Europe.⁴⁸

1014. Great sea flood.

1016. Great hail, thunder, and lightning.⁴⁹

1022. Extreme heat in the summer.

1039. A severe winter.

1041. Inclement seasons all the year, and unproductive; and great mortality amongst the cattle.⁵⁰

1043-4. A dreadful famine in England and the continent. A sester of wheat sold for above sixty pennies.⁵¹

1047. An uncommon fall of snow. Trees broken by it.⁵²

1048. Earthquake at Worcester, Derby, and other places; and a great mortality.⁵³

Of the Anglo-Saxon husbandry we may remark, that Domesday Survey gives us some indications that the cultivation of the church lands was much superior to that of any other order of society. They have much less wood upon them, and less common of pasture; and what they had appears often in smaller and more irregular pieces; while their meadow was more abundant, and in more numerous distributions.

⁴⁷ Lamb. Schaff. p. 158. Sigeb. Gembl. 589.

⁴⁸ Sim. Dun. 165. Sig. Gembl. 591.

⁴⁹ Sax. Chron. 146. Lamb. Schaff. 158.

⁵⁰ Sig. Gembl. 593. Sim. Dun. 180.

⁵¹ Sax. Chron. 157. Sig. Gembl. 596.

The MS. Claud. C. 9. mentions that the

sextarius of wheat sold for five shillings, p. 129. Henry of Huntingdon says the same, adding, that a sextarius of wheat used to be the burthen of one horse, p. 365.

⁵² Sim. Dun. 180. Sig. Gembl. 597.

⁵³ Sax. Chron. 133.

CHAP. II.

*Their Proprietorship in Land and Tenures.*BOOK
IX.

WHEN the Anglo-Saxons established themselves in Britain, a complete revolution in the possession of landed property must have taken place, so far as it concerned the persons of the proprietors. They succeeded by the sword. All the chieftains of the octarchy had many years of warfare to wage, before they could extort the occupation of the country. In such fierce assaults, and such desperate resistance, the largest part of the proprietary body of the Britons must have perished.

What system of tenures the Anglo-Saxon conquerors established, will be best known from the language of their grants. Some antiquaries have promulged very inaccurate ideas on this subject; and we can only hope to escape error, by consulting the documents, and studying the legal phrases, of the Anglo-Saxon period.

We find the land distinguished in their laws by various epithets. We there meet with boc lande, gafole land, folc land, bisceopa land, thegne's land, neat land, and frigan earthe.⁵⁴ The proprietors of land are called dryhtne, hlaforde, agende or land hlaforde, and land agende.⁵⁵ The occupiers of land were named ceorl, geneat, landesman, tunesman,⁵⁶ and such like.

From Domesday-book, we find, that of some lands, the king was the chief proprietor; of others, the bishops and abbots; of others, several earls and persons of inferior dignity. A few specimens may be given. Thus in Sussex

The king had	- - - - -	59½ hides.
Archbishop of Canterbury,	- -	214

⁵⁴ Wilkins, Leges Sax. p. 43. 47. 49. 65. 76. ⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 2. 10. 11. 15. 21. 8. 58. 63.

⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 18. 47. 101. 105.

Bishop of Chichester,	- - -	184 hides.
Abbot of Westminster,	- - -	7
Abbot of Fescamp,	- - -	135
Bishop Osbern,	- - -	149
Abbot of St. Peter, Winchester,	-	33
Church of Battle,	- - -	60½
Abbot of St. Edward,	- - -	21
Comes of Oro,	- - -	196¼
Comes of Moriton,	- - -	520
Comes Roger,	- - -	818
William of Warene,	- - -	620¼
William of Braiose,	- - -	452¼
Odo and Eldred,	- - -	10

These were the tenentes in capite, the great proprietors in demesne. The men who resided on the land, and in the burgs under these in this county, may be seen in Domesday-book. In other counties, we find the same description of persons possessing land, with the addition of others. Thus the great proprietors in Hertfordshire were the king, the archbishop of Canterbury, five bishops, three abbots, an abbess, two canons, four earls or comites, twenty-four less dignified individuals, and three ladies. Two of these ladies are described as wives. Thus: "Rothais, wife of Richard, son of earl Gislebert, holds Standor, and defends herself for eleven hides; Adeliz, wife of Hugo of Grentmaisnil, holds Brochesborne, and defends herself for five hides and a half." The other was the daughter of Radulf Tailgebosch, and held four hides in Hoderdon.

In Buckinghamshire the chief proprietors were, the king, the archbishop, five bishops, two abbots, an abbess, a canon, a presbyter, two earls, thirty-eight other individuals; the queen, countess Judith Azelina, wife of Radulf Tailgebosch, the king,thane, and eleemosinners.

But subordinate tenures are also mentioned in this valuable record. Thus the abbess of Berching held Tiburn (Tyburn)

under the king, and the canons of St. Paul held of the king five hides in Fulham. Many tenures of this sort appear.⁵⁷

To several tenures it is added, that the possessors could not give or sell the land without leave.⁵⁸

Other tenants are mentioned, who could turn themselves, with their land, wherever they pleased.⁵⁹

Land held in *elemosinam*, or *frankalmoigne*, also appears.⁶⁰

Of other tenants it is said, that they held certain manors, but rendered no service to the abbot, except thirty shillings a year.⁶¹

Sochmanni, and the *terra sochmannorum*, are mentioned: of two of them it is expressed, that they could sell without leave; while another is declared unable to give or sell without his lord's leave. Two other *sochmanni* are called Men of the bishop of London.⁶²

One of the *sochmen*, who could do what he chose with the land, was a canon of St. Paul's.

Of the tenures which appear from the Anglo-Saxon grants, the first that may be noticed is that of pure freehold of inheritance, unconnected with any limitation or service. Thus, in a conveyance made between 691 and 694, the kinsman of the king of Essex gives some land, amounting to 40 manentium. The conveying words are, "I Hodilredus, the kinsman of Sebbi, in the province of the East Saxons, with his consent, of my own will, in sound mind, and by just advice, for ever deliver to thee, and, from my right, transcribe into thine, the land, &c., with all things belonging to it, with the fields, wood, meadows, and marsh, that, as well thou as thy posterity, may hold, possess, and have free power to do with the land whatsoever thou wilt."⁶³

In another, dated in 704, from a king to a bishop, of 30 *cassatorum*, at Tincenhom, in Middlesex, the words are, "We

⁵⁷ Domesday-book.

⁵⁸ Ibid. fo. 129.

⁵⁹ Ibid. fo. 6, 7. 129.

⁶⁰ Ibid. fo. 12. 137.

⁶¹ Domesday-book, fo. 12.

⁶² Ibid. fo. 11. 129.

⁶³ MS. Augustus, 2. 26. printed in Smith's Appendix to Bede, p. 748.

“ have decreed to give in dominio to Waldhare, bishop, part
“ of a field, &c. The possession of this land so as afore-
“ said, with fields to be sowed, pastures, meadows, marshes,
“ fisheries, rivers, closes, and appurtenances, we deliver to
“ be possessed in dominio by the above bishop in perpetual
“ right, and that he have the free power of doing whatsoever
“ he will.”⁶⁴

There seems to have been no prescribed form of words for the conveyance of a freehold estate, because we find that almost every grant varies in some of its phrases. The most essential requisite seems to have been that the words should imply an intended perpetuity of possession. One other specimen of a freehold grant, not quite so absolute as the above, may be added: “ That it may be in his power, and may
“ remain firmly fixed in hereditary right, both free from
“ the services of all secular things within and without, and
“ from all burden and injury of greater or smaller causes,
“ and that he may have the liberty of changing or giving it
“ in his life, and after his death may have the power of
“ leaving it to whomsoever he will.”⁶⁵

Freehold estates also occur, made subject to the three great services to which almost all lands were liable. In these cases the duty of military expedition, and bridge and castle work, are expressly excepted.⁶⁶ A modification of this freehold tenure is, where the grant is for the life of the person receiving it, with a power of giving it to any person after his death in perpetual inheritance. This kind of estate very frequently occurs in the Saxon grants, and differs from the pure and absolute freehold, inasmuch as it does not appear that the tenant for life had the liberty of alienating it before his death, nor that it was descendible to his heirs if he made no testamentary devise.

⁶⁴ Appendix to Bede, p. 749.

⁶⁵ MS. Charters of the late Mr. Astle, No. 7.

⁶⁶ MS. Claud. C. 9. p. 112, 113.

Thus in a grant, dated 756, the part which lawyers call the habendum, and which determines the nature of the tenure, is thus expressed: "I will give it him for ever—That he may
" have and possess it as long as he lives, and after that time,
" that he may leave it to any person he shall please, to be
" possessed in hereditary right, with the same liberty in which
" it is granted to him."⁶⁷

Others are in these phrases: "To have and possess it in his
" own possession, and for his days to enjoy it happily, and
" after his days to leave to whomsoever shall be agreeable to
" him in everlasting inheritance."⁶⁸

A very common tenure in the Anglo-Saxon times was, that the person to whom an estate was conveyed should hold it for his life, and should have the power of giving it after his death to any one, two, three, or more heirs, as mentioned in the grant; after which it should revert either to the original proprietor making the grant, or to some ecclesiastical body or other person mentioned in it.

Thus Oswald gives lands to a person, in the stability of perpetual inheritance; that in having, he may hold it, and possessing it, may enjoy it, for the length of his life. After his death he might leave it to any two heirs whom he preferred, to have it continuedly—After their death it was to revert to the church of St. Mary.⁶⁹

In 984 Oswald gave to his kinsman, Eadwig, and his wife, three mansæ, for their lives. If the husband survived her, he was to be deemed the first possessor, or heir of the land; or if she survived, she was to be the first heir. They were empowered to leave all to their offspring, if they had any; if not, the survivor was to leave it to any two heirs.⁷⁰

Thus a bishop gave to Berhtwulf, the Mercian king, certain lands "for the space of the days of five men, to have

⁶⁷ Smith's App. p. 767.

⁶⁸ Astle's MS. Charters, No. 12 and No. 16.

⁶⁹ Smith's App. Bede, p. 773.

⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 778.

“ and to enjoy it with justice; and after the number of their
“ days, that it may be returned, without any dissention or
“ conflict, to the church in Worcester.” This same land
Berhtwulf gave to his minister, Echercht, “ for the space of
“ the days of five men, as before it was given to him.”⁷¹

Sometimes an attempt was made to possess the land beyond the number of lives indicated. It is mentioned in a charter, that one Cynethryth had conveyed some land for three lives, and that Ælsted had added three more lives; when it was discovered, by inspecting the hereditarios libros of the king, Kenulf, who first granted it, that the person originally receiving it had only the power of giving it for one life. Consequently the subsequent grants were set aside.⁷²

A life estate was also a very frequent tenure. Sometimes the remainder that was to follow a life estate was expressed. This was usually to the church.

Thus Aldred, in the middle of the eighth century, gave a monastery to his relation, “ on condition that she possess it
“ as long as she lives, and when she goes the way of her
“ fathers,” it was to revert to the church of Worcester, into the jus of the episcopal seat.⁷³ An archbishop devised land to a person for life, with remainder to an abbey.⁷⁴

The land passing by these grants was called Bocland, as the land held by bishops was mentioned as Bisceopa land; the land of Thegns was Thegnes land, and the land of Earles was Earles land. All these occur in Domesday-book. There was also King’s land, Gerefa land, and such like; but these names attached to land seem rather to express the quality of the demesne proprietors than any other circumstance.

One grant is rather singular, in the limitations of the estate which it conveys. The king gives a manor to Edred, and permits Edred to give it to Lulla and Sigethrythe, who are enjoined to give part of the land to Eaulfe and Herewine.

⁷¹ Heming. Chart. p. 6. 8.

⁷² Ibid. p. 29.

⁷³ Smith’s App. Bede, p. 765.

⁷⁴ MS. Claud. C. 9. p. 125.

But Eaulfe was to give half of this part to Biarnulve, and to enjoy the other half for his own life, with the power of devising it as he pleased.⁷⁵

To these tenures we may add the Gafoleland, or land granted or demised on the condition of paying some contribution in money or other property. Thus archbishop Ealdulf, in 996, gave land to a miles, for his life and two heirs, but annexed a condition, that they should provide every year fifteen salmon.⁷⁶ An abbot and the monks demised twenty-seven acres to a person, that he might have them in stipendium as long as he served them well.⁷⁷

An ancient lease is mentioned in the year 852, by which Ceolred, abbot of Medeshamstede, and the monks, let (leot) to Wulfred the land at Sempigaham for her life, on condition that he gave (besides some other land) a yearly rent of sixty fother of wood, twelve fother of græfan (which may mean coals) six fother of turf, two tuns full of clear ale, two slain cattle, six hundred loaves, ten mittan of Welsh ale, one horse, thirty shillings, and a night's lodging.⁷⁸ A marsh was leased at the rent of two thousand eels.⁷⁹ By the laws, a ceorl, who had gafol lande, was estimated at two hundred shillings.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ Astle's MS. Charters, No. 20.

⁷⁶ Heming. Chart. p. 191.

⁷⁷ 3 Gale's Script. p. 475.

⁷⁸ Sax. Chron. p. 75.

⁷⁹ 3 Gale's Script. p. 477.

⁸⁰ Wilkins, Leg. Sax. p. 47.

CHAP. III.

*The Burdens to which Lands were liable,
and their Privileges.*

THE oldest Saxon grants we have, contain reservations of services which the possessor of the land had to perform; and, from the language of those which have survived to our times, we perceive that certain burdens, though varying in kind and quantity, were attached to estates in every age. Some few were exempted from any; a larger proportion were freed from all but the three great necessities, which in one charter are described to be, "what it is necessary that all people should do, and from which work none can be excused."¹

CHAP.
III.

These three common labours, or universal necessities, as they are frequently styled, are the fyrd-færelde; the bryge-geweorc; and the weal, or fæsten-geweorc.

The fyrd-færelde was the military service to which all the Saxon lands appear to have been subject, excepting those which the king, with the consent of his Witena, or sometimes the king alone, expressly exempted from the obligation. This military service consisted in providing a certain number of armed men, proportioned to the rated quantity of land, who were to attend the king or his officers on expeditions made for the public safety, or against invading enemies. What number of men a given quantity of land was to furnish, cannot now be precisely stated; though it would seem, from Domesday-book, that five hides found one soldier in most counties. In the year 821 a grant of various lands was made, with the specified condition, that the owner should attend the public expedition with twelve vassals and as many shields.² Even

¹ Heming. Chart. p. 109.

² MS. Claud. C. 9. p. 104.

church lands were not exempt from this general obligation of military service. We find a person mentioned as a witness, who was "the leader of the army of the same bishop to the king's service."³ Egelwin, prior of a monastery, gave to a miles the villa of Crohlea for life, on the condition that he should serve for the monastery in the expeditions by sea and land.⁴

There are many grants of lands to monasteries in which the military service is expressly reserved. It is almost always spoken of as a general, known, and established thing. It is mentioned in Domesday-book, of the burgh of Lideford, in Devonshire, that when an expedition is on foot, either by land or sea, the burg has to render the same amount of service as should be required from Totness.

Of Totness it is said, that when expeditions are enjoined, as much service is to be rendered from Totness, Barnstaple, and Lideford, as from Exeter; and Exeter was to serve as for five hides of land.⁵

It is from Domesday-book that we may collect the most precise information on this curious topic. It is said of Berkshire, that, "if the king should send an army any where, only one soldier should go for five hides; and for his victuals and pay, every hide was to give him four shillings for two months. This money was not to be sent to the king, but to be given to the soldiers."⁶

Of the city of Oxford it is said, that when the king should go on an expedition, twenty burghers should go with him for all the others, or that twenty pounds should be paid, that all might be free.⁷

This curious article shews, that the military service might be commuted by a pecuniary mulct.

In Worcestershire it is declared, that "when the king

³ Heming. Chart. p. 81.

⁴ Ibid. p. 265.

⁵ Domesday-book, con. Devenscire.

⁶ Domesday-book, con. Berockescire.

⁷ Ibid. Oxenefordscire.

“ goes against the enemy, if any one, after summoned by his mandate, should remain, he should (if he was a freeman having his sac, and able to go where he pleased) forfeit all his land at the pleasure of the king.” But if he was a free-man under another lord, his lord should carry another man for him, and the offender should pay his lord forty shillings. But if no one at all went for him, he was to pay his lord that sum, who was to be answerable for as much to the king.⁸

On these expeditions it was the privilege of the men serving for Herefordshire, that they should form the advanced guard in the progress, and the rear guard in a retreat.⁹

From Leicester twelve burghers were to go with the king when he went with an army by land. If the expedition was maritime, they were to send him four horses from the same burg, as far as London, to carry their arms and necessaries.¹⁰

The custom of Warwick was, that ten burghers should go on the expedition for the rest. Whoever did not go after his summons, forfeited to the king one hundred shillings. When the king went by sea against his enemies, this burg was to send him four batsueins, or four pounds of pennies.¹¹

The fyrde, or expedition, is mentioned so early as in the laws of Ina. If a sith-cund man owning land abstained from the fyrde, he was to pay one hundred and twenty shillings, and lose his land. If he is not a land-owner, he was to pay sixty shillings, and a ceorl sixty shillings, for the fyrde mulct.¹² In the laws of Ethelred the fyrde is ordered to take place as often as there be need, and the scyp-fyrdrunga, or naval expedition, was directed to be so diligently prepared as to be ready every year soon after Easter. It is added, that if any depart from the fyrde where the king himself is, both his life and goods should be the forfeit; if he, in any other case quitted it, he was fined one hundred and twenty shillings.¹³

⁸ Domesday-book, Wirecestrescire.

⁹ Ibid. com. Herefordscire.

¹⁰ Ibid. Ledcestrescire.

¹¹ Ibid. Warwicscire.

¹² Wilk. Leg. Sax. p. 23.

¹³ Ibid. p. 109.

In one of the grants it is mentioned, that a land-owner had lost his rus of ten cassatos, because he had rebelled with the king's soldiers in his expedition, and had committed much rapine and other crimes.¹⁴

The other two great services to which land was generally liable were, the construction or reparation of bridges and fortresses, or walls. These are enjoined to be done in almost every grant. In Domesday-book it is said of Chester, that the prepositus should cause one man for every hide to come to rebuild the wall and bridge of the city; or if the man should fail to come, his lord was to pay forty shillings.¹⁵

Besides these three great services, which later writers have called the *trinoda necessitas*, there were many other burdens to which the landed interest was more or less liable in the hands of the sub-proprietors.

A careful provision is made in many grants against royal tributes and impositions, and those of the great and powerful. In one it is mentioned, that the king should not require his pasture, nor the entertainment of those men called *Fæsting-men*, nor of those who carry hawks, falcons, horses, or dogs.¹⁶ In another it is agreed, that the wood should not be cut for the buildings, of either king or prince.¹⁷ It is elsewhere expressed, that the land should be free from the pasture and refec-tion of those men called in Saxon *Walhfæreld*, and their feasting, and of all Englishmen or foreigners, noble and ignoble.¹⁸ This burden of being compelled to entertain others, is mentioned in several grants. In one, the pasture of the king's horses and grooms,¹⁹ and of his swine, which was called *fearn leswe*,²⁰ is noticed.

It is probable that these royal impositions attached only to the lands which were or had been of the royal demesne. The

¹⁴ MS. Claud. C. 9. p. 132.

¹⁵ Domesday, Cestrescire.

¹⁶ MS. Claud. C. 9. p. 104. Thorpe,
R. R. 22.

¹⁷ MS. Claud.

¹⁸ Heming. Chart. 31.

¹⁹ Ibid. 58.

²⁰ Ibid. 86.

pecuniary payments which resulted to the king from the landed estates in England are enumerated in Domesday-book.

When the original proprietors aliened or demised their lands to others, they annexed a variety of conditions to their grants, which subsequent transfers either repeated or discharged. Some of these may be stated. One contract was, that the person to whom the land was given should plough, sow, reap, and gather in the harvest of two acres of it, for the use of the church.²¹ Another was, that the tenant should go with all his craft twice a year, once to plough, and at the other time to reap, for the grantors.²² Another grant reserves two bushels of pure grain. Another, the right of feeding one hundred swine. Another exacts the ploughing and reaping of a field.²³ In others a ship, in others lead is reserved.²⁴ Offa gave the land of twenty manentium to the church at Worcester, on the terms of receiving a specified gafol from the produce of the land.²⁵ The services and customs attached to the possession of burghs, houses, and lands, which are mentioned in the Domesday Survey, may be consulted as giving much illustration to this topic. Sometimes an imposition was made on the land of a province by general consent. Thus, for building Saint Edmund's church, four denarii were put annually on every carucata of earth, by the consent of the landholders.²⁶ There were also ecclesiastical duties attached to land.

It is said by Lord Coke, that the first kings of this realm had all the lands of England in demesne, and that they reserved to themselves the grand manors and royalties, and enfeoffed the barons of the realm with the remainder, for the defence of the realm, with such jurisdiction as the courts baron now have, and instituted the freeholders to be judges

²¹ Heming. Chart 134.

²² Ibid. 189.

²³ Ibid. 144. p. 174. 208. I quote Hearne's edition of this book; but cannot avoid saying, that the Saxon passages are badly

printed. Either the transcript was made, or the press set and corrected, by a person ignorant of Saxon.

²⁴ Dugdale, Mon. i. p. 19, 20, 141.

²⁵ Ibid. 101.

²⁶ Ibid. p. 291.

of the court baron.²⁷ Much of this statement may be true; but it can be only made inferentially, for no positive information has descended to modern times of what lands the Saxon chieftains possessed themselves, nor how they disposed of them. We may recollect, that, according to the laws of the Britons in Wales, in the ninth century, all the land of the kingdom was declared to belong to the king;²⁸ and we may safely believe that the same law prevailed while the Britons occupied the whole island.

It is highly probable that the Saxon war-cyning succeeded to all the rights of the monarch he dispossessed; and, in rewarding his companions and warriors with the division of the spoil, it can be as little doubted, that from those to whom the cyning or the witenaga gave the lands of the British landholders, a certain portion of military service was exacted, in order to maintain the conquest they had achieved. This was indispensable, as nearly a century elapsed before the struggle was completely terminated between the Britons and the invaders. It was also a law among the Britons, that all should be compelled to build castles when the king pleased.²⁹ But that the lands in the hands of the Anglo-Saxon proprietors were subject to the fyrd, as a general and inevitable burden, and that this military service was rigorously exacted, and its neglect severely punished, and was to be performed when called for by the king, the facts already adduced have abundantly proved. Enough has been also said to shew that custom, or the will of individuals, had imposed on many estates personal services, pecuniary rents, and other troublesome exactions. Hence there can be no doubt, that the most essential part of what has been called the feudal system actually prevailed among the Anglo-Saxons. The term vassals was also used by them. Asser, the friend of Alfred, has the

²⁷ Coke on Littleton, 58.²⁸ Leges Wallicæ Hoel, chap. 337.²⁹ Ibid. p. 165.

expression, nobilibus vassallis;³⁰ and grants of kings to their vassals are not unfrequent.

CHAP.
III.

The Anglo-Saxon proprietors of land in demesne were, in many respects, the little sovereigns of their territories, from the legal privileges which, according to the grants, and to the customs of the times, they possessed and were entitled to exercise. Their privileges consisted of their civil and criminal jurisdictions, their pecuniary profits and gafols, and their power over the servile part of their tenantry and domestics.

It is an appendage to many grants of land, that the possessors should have the sac and soc, or a certain extent of civil and criminal jurisdiction. Thus Edward the Confessor gave to the abbot of Abbendon sace and socne, toll and team, infangenetheof binnan burgan, and butan burgan; ham soene, grithbrice and forestal.³¹ Similar privileges are given, with many additions, in various grants, and they conveyed, not only the right of holding courts within the limits of the estate, to determine the causes and offences arising within it, but also the fines and payments, or part of them, with which the crimes were punished. In some grants these fines were shared with the king.³² Sometimes the liberty of holding markets, and of receiving toll, is allowed, and sometimes an exemption from toll. There seems to be no doubt that the Anglo-Saxons took lands by inheritance. The peculiar modes of inheritance, called gavelkind, where all the children inherited; and borough-english, where the youngest son was the heir; have been referred to the Saxon times.

³⁰ Asser. Vit. Alfredi, p. 33.

³¹ MS. Claud. C. 9. p. 130.

³² Ibid. p. 104.

C H A P. IV.

*Their Conveyances.*BOOK
IX.

WE have several of their grants of land without any pecuniary consideration; of their conveyances on purchase; of their deeds of exchange; their testamentary devises, and their leases. These are all short and simple—as short and as simple as they might always be made if the ingenuity of mankind were less directed to evade their legal contracts by critical discussions of their construction.

The Saxon conveyances consisted principally of these things:

1st, The grantor's name and title are stated. In the older charters the description is very simple. It is more full in those of a later period; but the grants of Edgar are generally distinguished from those of other kings, by a pompous and inflated commencement.

2d, A recital is usually inserted, in many instances preceding the donor's name. Sometimes it states his title, or some circumstance connected with it. Sometimes the recital is on the brevity and uncertainty of life, and on the utility of committing deeds to writing—sometimes of the charitable or friendly feelings which occasioned the grant; and one recital states that the former land-boc, or conveyance, had been destroyed by fire, and that the owner had applied for new ones.

3d, The conveying words follow, which are usually “Do et concedo; donare decrevimus; concedimus et donamus; dabo; trado;” or other terms of equivalent import, either of Latin or Saxon.

4th, The person's name then occurs to whom the land is granted. The name is sometimes given without any addition, and sometimes the quality or parentage is simply mentioned, as Eadredo, Liaban fili Birgwines; meo fideli ministro Æthel-

wende; Æthelnotho præfecto meo; Ealdberhto ministro meo, atque Selethrythe sorori tuæ, &c.

CHAP.
IV.

5th, What lawyers call the consideration of a deed is commonly inserted. This is sometimes pro intimo caritatis affectu, pro ejus humili obedientia, pro redemptione animæ meæ, and such like. Often it is for money paid, or a valuable consideration.

6th, Another circumstance frequently mentioned in the royal grants is, that it was done with the consent of the witeana or nobles, or in other grants of the superior lord.

7th, The premises are then mentioned. They are described shortly in the body of the grant by their measured or estimated quantity of land, and the name of the place where they were situate. Some general words then follow, often very like those annexed to the description of premises in our modern conveyances. The grants shew that the land of the country was in a state of cultivated divisions, and was known by its divisional appellations. Sometimes the name given to it is expressed to be that by which it was locally known among the inhabitants of the district. At others the name is expressed to be its ancient or well-known denomination. The appellation, however, is usually Saxon; though in some few places it is obviously British.

When estates were large, they comprehended many pieces of land, of various descriptions. With the arable land, meadow, marsh, wood, and fisheries, were often intended to be passed. In our times, lest the words expressly used to indicate the land conveyed should not include all the property included in the purchase, words of large and general import are added, without any specific idea that such things are actually attached. Such expressions occur in the Saxon charters. Thus, in a grant dated in 679, after the land is mentioned, we have "with all things pertaining to it; fields, meadows, marshes, woods, fens, and all fisheries to the same land belonging." In the Anglo-Saxon grants of a more recent

date, the general words are nearly as numerous as in our present deeds.

Besides the first description of the place, and the general words, there are commonly added, at the end of the grant, the particular boundaries of the land. The grants are, for the most part, in Latin, and the boundaries in Saxon.

8th, The nature of the tenure is then subjoined, whether for life or lives, or in perpetuity, or whether any reversion is to ensue.

9th, The services from which the land is liberated, and those to which it is to continue subject, are then expressed.

10th, Some exhortations are then inserted to others, not to disturb the donation, and some imprecations on those who attempt it.

11th, The date, the place of signature if a royal grant, and the witnesses, usually conclude it. The date is sometimes in the beginning.

It may be here remarked, that the Saxon deeds had no wax seals. These were introduced by the Norman conquest.¹

The divisions of land mentioned in the Saxon charters are marked and distinguished by precise boundaries. We will mention some of them, as they will shew, very satisfactorily, the agricultural state of the country. They sometimes occur concisely in Latin; but it was far more usual to express them in Saxon, even in Latin charters. This was perhaps that they might be more generally and exactly known, and, in case of dispute, easier proved. The juries, gemots, and witnesses of the day, might mistake a Latin description, but not a vernacular one.

In 866 the boundaries of two manentes run thus: "From Sture on the Honey-brook, up behind the brook on the old hedge; along the hedge on the old way; along the way on the great street; along the street on four boundaries, then so to Calcbrook, along the brook; then so to Horse-brook, along

¹ Ingulf. p. 70. 3 Gale, 409.

the brook; then so to the ditch, along the ditch to the Sture again; on Sture to the ditch that is called Thredestreo, along the ditch on Heasecan-hill; from Heasecan-hill to the ditch, along the ditch to Wenforth, along Wenforth, then again on the Sture.”²

“First the Icenan at Brom-bridge, up and along the way to Hlide-gate; thence along the valley to Beamstead; then by the hedge to Searnegles-ford; then up by Swetheling to Sow-brook; then forth by the boundary to Culesfield, forth by the right measured to the Steed lea, so to the Kids-field; then to the boundary valley, so to the Tæppe-lea; so on to Sheep-lea, then to Broad-bramble, so to the old Gibbet-place, then on to the deep dell; then by the wooden boundary mark to Back-gate; thence by the mark to the old fold; thence north and east to the military path, and by the military path to the Stocks of the high ford, so by the mere of the Hide-stream to Icenan; then up by the stream and so to the east of Wordige; thence by the right mark to the thorn of the mere; thence to the red cross, so on by the Ealderman’s mark; from the mark then it cometh to Icenan up by the stream to the ford of Alders; thence to Kid-burn, up and along the burn to the military path, so to the Turngate within the fish water to Sheepswick; then by the right mere to the Elderford, so to the Broad-valley, then to the Milk-valley, so to the Meal-hill, and along the way to the mark of the Forester’s, south of the boundary to the hay-meadow, then to Clæanfield, so on Copper-valley, forth by the hedge on the angle field; then forth on the Icenan north of Steneford, so with the stream till it cometh again on Brombridge.”³

“These are the boundaries of the land to Cerotesege (Chertsey), and to Thorpe: That is, first on the Waymouth up and along the way to Way-bridge; from Way-bridge within the eel mill ditch; midward from the ditch to the old military street, and along the street on Woburn-bridge, and along

² Smith’s App. Bede, 770.

³ Dugd. Mon. 37.

the burn on the great willow; from the great willow along the lake on the pool above Crocford; from the head of this pool right to the elder; from the elder right on the military street; along the street to Curten-staple; from Curten-staple along the street to the hoar-thorn; from the thorn to the oak tree; from the oak tree to the three hills; from the three hills to the Sihtran; from the sithren to the limitary brook; from the limitary brook to Exlæpesburn; from Exlæpesburn to the hoar maple; from the hoar maple to the three trees; from the three trees along the deep brook right to the Wallgate; from the Wallgate to the clear pool; from the clear pool to the foul brook; from the foul brook to the black willow; from the black willow right to the Wallgate, and along the Thames to the other part of Mixten-ham in the water between the hill island and Mixten-ham, and along the water to Nettle-island; from that island and along the Thames about Oxlake to Bere-hill, and so forth along the Thames to Hamen-island; and so along the middle of the stream to the mouth of the Way.”⁴

In 743 these boundaries occur: “First from Turcan Spring’s head and along the street on Cynelms-stone on the mill-way, then and along the ridge on Hart-ford; thence and along the streams on the city ford on the fosse on the speaking place; thence on Turcan-valley on the seven springs, midward of the springs to Bale’s-hill, south, then on the chalk-wall; thence again on Turcan-valley, and along again on the Turcan Spring’s head.”⁵

“First from Thames mouth and along the Thames in Wynnabæce’s mouth; from Wynnabæce to Woodymoor; from Woodymoor to the wet ditch; from the wet ditch to the beach, and from the beach to the old dike; from the old dike to the sedge-moor; from the sedge-moor to the head of the pool, and along to Thorn-bridge; from Thorn-bridge to Kadera-pool; from Kadera-pool to Beka-bridge; from

⁴ Dugd. Mon. 76.⁵ Heming. Chart. 57.

Beka-bridge to the forepart of the Hipes-moor; from that moor within Coforth-brook; from the brook within the hedge; after the hedge to the hillock called Kett; from Kett to the barrows; from the barrows to Lawern; from Lawern into the ditch; and after the ditch to the Ship-oak; and from the Ship-oak to the great aspen, and so in to the reedy slough; from the slough within the barrows; from the barrows to the way of the five oaks, and after that way within the five oaks; from the oaks to the three boundaries; from the three boundaries to the bourn of the lake; from that bourn to the mile-stone; from that stone to the hoar apple-tree; from that apple-tree within Doferie; after Doferie to Severn, and along the Severn to the Thames mouth." ⁶

In one of the boundaries a wolf-pit occurs. ⁷

⁶ Heming. Chart. 75.

⁷ 3 Gale, 520.

C H A P. V.

*Some Particulars of the Names of Places in Middlesex
and London, in the Saxon Times.*

BOOK
IX.

IT appears from Domesday-book that in the Saxon times, the county of Middlesex had been divided into hundreds, which were distinguished by the names that they now bear, with small variations of pronunciation or orthography.

Domesday Names for the
Hundreds of Middlesex.

Osuluestone,
Gara,
Helethorne,
Spelethorne,
Adelmetone,
Honeslaw,

Modern Names.

Ossulston.
Gore.
Elthorne.
Spelthorne.
Edmonton.
Hounslow.

Among the places mentioned in the county in Domesday-book, we may easily discern the following ancient and modern names to correspond :

Holeburne,
Stibenhede,
Fuleham,
Tueverde,
Wellesdone,
Totehele,
Scepertone,
Hochestone,
Neutone,
Pancrass,
Draitone,
Hamestede,
Stanes,
Sunneberie.

Holborn.
Stepney.
Fulham.
Twyford.
Wilsdon.
Tothil.
Shepperton.
Hoxton.
Newington.
Pancrass.
Drayton.
Hamstead.
Staines.
Sunbury.

Greneforde,	Greenford.
Hanewelle,	Hanwell.
Covelie,	Cowley.
Handone,	Hendon.
Hermodeswarde,	Harmondsworth.
Tiburne,	Tyburn.
Haneworde,	Hanworth.
Hardintone,	Harlington.
Hillendone,	Hillingdon.
Ticheham,	Twickenham.
Leleham,	Laleham.
Exeforde,	Uxbridge.
Bedefunt,	Bedfont.
Felteham,	Feltham.
Stanmere,	Stanmore.
Northala,	Northall.
Adelmetone,	Edmonton.
Eneffelde,	Enfield.
Rislepe,	Ruislip.
Chingesberie,	Kingsbury.
Stanwelle,	Stanwell.
Hamntone,	Hampton.
Hergotestane,	Hestone.
Cranforde,	Cranford.
Chelched,	Chelsea.
Chenesita,	Kensington.
Iseldone,	Islington.
Toteham,	Tottenham.
Hesa,	Hayes.

The local denominations by which the various places in England are now known, seem to have been principally imposed by our Anglo-Saxon ancestors. Most of them, in their composition, betray their Saxon origin; and whoever will take the trouble to compare the names in Domesday-book, which prevailed in the island during the time of the

Confessor, with the present appellations of the same places, will find that the greatest number of them correspond. The hundreds in the county of Sussex were sixty-three, and still remain so ; of these, thirty-eight bore the same names as now : and of the villæ or maneria, which are about three hundred and forty-five, there are two hundred and thirty with appellations like their present.

The following list will shew the correspondencies, between the ancient and modern names of the counties, which occur in Domesday-book :

Chenth.	Midelsexe.
Sudsex.	Hertfordscire.
Sudrie.	Bockinghamsaire.
Hantescire.	Oxenefordscire.
Berrochescire,	Glowecestersaire.
or	Wirecestersaire.
Berchescire.	Herefordscire.
Wiltscire.	Grentebriescire.
Dorsete.	Huntedunscire.
Sumersete.	Bedefordscire.
Devenescire.	Northantonesaire.
Cornvalgie.	Ledescestresaire.
Warwicsaire.	Roteland.
Staffordscire.	Eurvicsaire.
Sciropescire.	Lincolscire.
Cestresaire.	Exsessa.
Derbysaire.	Nordfolc.
Snotinghamscire.	Sudfolc.

London is mentioned in Bede as the metropolis of the East Saxons in the year 604, lying on the banks of the Thames, " the emporium of many people coming by sea and land."¹

In a grant, dated 889, a court in London is conveyed " at the ancient stony edifice called by the citizens hwæt

¹ Bede, l. 2. c. 3.

“ mundes stone, from the public street to the wall of the
“ same city.”* From this we learn that so early as 889 the
walls of London existed.

In 857 we find a conveyance of a place in London called
Ceolmundinge haga, not far from the West Gate.³ This West
Gate may have been either Temple Bar or Holborn Bars.

Ethelbald, the Mercian king, gave a court in London,
between two streets called Tiddberti-street and Savin-street.⁴

Snorre, the Icclander, mentions the battle in Southwark
in the time of Ethelred II. He says the Danes took
London. On the other side of the Thames was a great
market, called Sudrvirki (Southwark), which the Danes for-
tified with many defences ; with a high and broad ditch, and
a rampart of stone, wood, and turf. The English under
Ethelred attacked these in vain.

The bridge between the city and Southwark was broad
enough for two vehicles to pass together. On the sides of the
bridge, fortifications and breast-works were erected fronting
the river. The bridge was sustained by pales fixed in the bed
of the river. Olave, the ally of Ethelred, assailed the bridge,
and succeeded in forcing it.⁵

Ethelbald grants the vectigal, or custom, paid by one ship
in the port of London to the church of Rochester.⁶

² Heming. 42.

³ Hem. 44.

⁴ Dugd. Mon. 138.

⁵ Snorre, excerpted in Johnstone's Celto-
Scand, p. 89. 92.

⁶ Thorpe Reg. Roff. 14.

C H A P. VI.

*Lawsuits about Land.*BOOK
IX.

WE have some account of their legal disputes about landed property in some of their documents, from which we will select a few particulars.

One charter states, that Wynfleth led her witnesses before the king. An archbishop, a bishop, an ealdorman, and the king's mother, were there. They were all to witness that Alfrith had given her the land. The king sent the writ by the archbishop, and by those who had witnessed it, to Leofwin, and desired that men should be assembled to the shire-gemot. The king then sent his seal to this gemot by an abbot, and greeted all the witan there. Two bishops, an abbot, and all the shire were there. The king commanded to be done that which was thought to be most right. The archbishop sent his testimony, and the bishop; they told her she must claim the land for herself. Then she claimed her possessions, with the aid of the king's mother. An abbot, a priest, an etheling, eight men, two abbesses, six other ladies, and many other good thegns and women, were there. She obtained her suit.*

In another transaction, a bishop paid fifteen pounds, for two hides, to Lefsius and his wife at Cambridge. Ten pounds of the money were paid before several witnesses. A day was appointed for the other five pounds. They made another convention between them, which was, that Lefsius and his wife should give the fifteen pounds for the five hides at Cleie, with the condition that the bishop should give, besides, a silver cup of forty shillings which the father of Lefsius, on his death-bed, bequeathed to the bishop. This agreement being made, they exchanged all the live and dead stock on

* MS. Cott. Aug. 2. p. 15.

the two lands. But before they had returned to the bishop those ten pounds at Cleie, king Edgar died. On his death Lefsius and his wife attempted to annul their agreement with the bishop, sometimes offered him the ten pounds which he had paid them, and sometimes denied that they owed any thing. Thus they thought to recover the land which they had sold; but the bishop overcame them with his witnesses. Presuming on success, Lefsius seized other lands. This violence occasioned these lands to remain two years without either ploughing or sowing or any cultivation. At last a generale placitum was held at London, whither the dukes, the princes, the satrapæ, the pleaders, and the lawyers, flowed from every part. The bishop then impleaded Lefsius, and before all expounded his cause, and the injury he had sustained.

This affair being well and properly and openly discussed by all, they decreed that the lands which Lefsius had forcibly taken should be restored to the bishop, and that Lefsius should make good all the loss and the mund, and forfeit to the king his were for the violence. Eight days afterwards they met again at Northampton: all the country having assembled, they exposed the same cause again before all; and it was determined in the same manner in which it had been adjudged at London. Every one then with oath on the cross returned to the bishop the lands which had been violently torn from him.

Thus far the narration gives no account of the two and the five hides about which the controversy began. But it is immediately afterwards mentioned, that soon after Lefsius died. On his death, the bishop and the alderman and the primates of Northamptonshire, and the procures of East Anglia, had a placitum at Walmesford in eight hundreds. It was there determined, among other things, that the widow of Lefsius and his heirs ought to compensate for the above-mentioned violence, as he ought to have done if he

had lived; and they appreciated the injury which the bishop had sustained at one hundred pounds. The aforesaid matron, supported with the good wishes of all the optimates, humbly requested the bishop to have mercy on her, and that she might commute her were, and that of her sons, for one hundred shillings, which the bishop was about to give her for the two hides at Dunham. The bishop was more benevolent to her than she expected; for he not only remitted to her the money in which she had been condemned, but paid her the hundred shillings which she had proposed to relinquish. He also gave her seven pounds for the crop on the land at Dunham.²

A piece of water was leased at a rent of two thousand eels. The tenants unjustly possessed themselves of some land of the monastery, without the adjudication or legal permission of the citizens and the hundred. The ealderman came to Ely, and Begmund and others were called for this cause, and summoned to the placitum of the citizens and of the hundred several times, but never came. The abbot did not therefore desist, but renewed his claim at the placita within the city and without, and oftentimes made his complaint. At length the ealderman held at Cambridge a great placitum of the citizens and hundreds, before twenty-four judges, under Thorningefeld, near Maideneburge. The abbot related how Begmund and others had unjustly seized the land, and though often summoned to the placitum, would never come. Then they all adjudged that the abbot should have his land, pool, and fishery, and that Begmund and the others should pay their fish to the abbot for six years, and should give their forfeiture to the king. They also decreed that if this was not performed willingly, they should be justified in the seizure of the offender's property. The ealderman also commanded that Oschetel, Oswy, of Becce, and Godere, of Ely, should go round the land, lead the abbot over it, and do all this, which was performed accordingly.³

² Hist. Eli. 3 Gale, 468, 469.

³ Hist. Eli. 3 Gale, 478.

In another dispute, on the non-performance of an agreement for the sale of land, the ealderman commanded the defendant to be summoned, and, going to Dittune, began there to narrate the causes and complaints, the agreements and their violation, by the testimony of many legal men. The defendant denied the whole. They ordered him to purge himself by the requisite oath; but as neither he nor they, who ought to have sworn with him, could do this, the cause was adjudged against him, and this judgment was afterwards confirmed at Cambridge.⁴

As many curious particulars of their legal customs appear in these narrations, we will add another.

Wlstan forfeited some land, which the king had purchased and sold to a bishop. About this time a great gemot was appointed at Witlesford, of the ealderman and his brothers, and the bishop, and the widow of Wlstan, and all the better counsellors of the county of Cambridge. When they all had sat down, Wensius arose and claimed the land, and said that he and his relations had been unjustly deprived of the land, as he had received for it no consideration, neither in land or money. Having heard this plea, the ealderman asked, if there were any one present who knew how Wlstan had acquired that land. Alfric of Wicham answered, that Wlstan had bought that land of Wensius for eight pounds, and he appealed to the eight hundreds on the south side of Cambridge as witnesses. He said Wlstan gave Wensius the eight pounds in two payments, the last of which he had sent by Leofwin, son of Adulf, who gave it to him in a purse, before the eight hundreds where the land lay. Having heard these things, they adjudged the land to the bishop, and they directed Wensius, or his relations, to look to the heirs of Wlstan if he wanted more money for his land.⁵

⁴ Hist. Eli. 3^d Gale, 484.

⁵ Ibid.

C H A P. VII.

*Their Denominations of Land.*BOOK
IX.

IN the charters we find various names for the quantities of land conveyed. These are, hidæ, cassati, mansæ, manentes, aratrum, sulunga.

The cassati, mansæ, the manentes, the aratrum, and the sulunga, appear to have expressed the same meaning which the word hide signified.

That the cassati and the mansæ were the same, appears from several grants; thus, ten mansas are in another part of the same grants called ten cassatos;¹ and thirty mansas, thirty cassatos.² So ten cassatos, when mentioned again, are styled ten mansos or mansas.³

In other grants, hides are stated as synonymous with cassatos. Thus, ten cassatos are, in the same grant, called ten hides,⁴ and twenty cassatos twenty hides.⁵ In other grants, the land, which, in the first part of the document, is enumerated as hides, is afterwards termed cassatos. Thus, fifty hides, fifty cassatos;⁶ seven hides, seven cassatos;⁷ five hides, five cassatos.⁸

The grants also identify the expressions mansæ and mansi with hide. A charter of 947 conveys twenty mansæ, "quod anglice dicitur twenty hides."⁹ In another, seven hides are also called seven mansæ.¹⁰ One mansa is one hide,¹¹ and five mansæ five hides.¹²

In one grant, the expressions fourteen mansiunculæ, and

¹ Cotton MS. Claud. C. 9. p. 195.

² Ibid. p. 119. 195.

³ Ibid. p. 131, 132.

⁴ Ibid. C. 9.

⁵ Ibid. p. 102. 194.

⁶ Ibid. p. 118.

⁷ Cotton MS. Claud. C. 9. p. 121.

⁸ Ibid. p. 130.

⁹ Ibid. Claud. B. 6. p. 37.

¹⁰ Ibid. Claud. C. 9. p. 130.

¹¹ Heming. Chart. p. 150.

¹² Ibid. p. 143. 182, 183.

forty jugeribus, are identified with fourteen hides and forty acres.¹³

CHAP.
VII.

All these authorities prove, that the hide, the cassatus, and the mansa, were similar designations of land. In one ancient MS. there is a note in the margin, in the same hand-writing with the body, thus, "No. qd. hide cassati et manse idem sunt."¹⁴

Other grants identify the sulunga with the preceding. Thus, one conveys sex mansas quod Cantigenæ dicunt six sulunga.¹⁵ Another mentions the land of three aratrorum as three sulong.¹⁶ Another says twelve mansas "quod Cantigenæ dicunt twelf "sulunga."¹⁷ Two cassati are also called two sulunga.¹⁸

The hide seems to have contained one hundred and twenty acres. In one historical narration of ancient grants, an hide is so defined: "unam hydam per sexies viginti acras;"¹⁹ two hides are afterwards mentioned as twelve times twenty arable acres.²⁰

In Domesday-book we find hides and carucatae mentioned.²¹ Carucata implies so much land as a single plough could work during a year.²² This ancient survey also contains acres, leucæ, and quarantenæ, among its terms for expressing the quantities of land.

The following measures of land occur in the Anglo-Saxon laws: 3 mila, 3 furlong, 3 æcera bræde, 9 fota, 9 scefta munda, 9 bere corna,²³ express the extent to which the king's peace was to reach.

¹³ MS. Claud. B. 6. p. 75.

¹⁴ Ibid. C. 9. p. 113.

¹⁵ MS. Chart of the late Mr. Astle, No. 23.

¹⁶ Ibid. No. 7.

¹⁷ Ibid. No. 24, and Thorpe Reg. Roff. 189.

¹⁸ MS. Chart Aug. 2. p. 68.

¹⁹ 3 Gale Script. p. 472.

²⁰ Ibid. 475. 481.

²¹ The word is usually abbreviated. In p. 77, and some other places, it occurs at full length.

²² See Du Cange, Gloss. Med. Lat. 1. p. 859.

²³ Wilkins, Leges Sax. p. 63.

THE
HISTORY
OF THE
ANGLO-SAXONS.

BOOK X.

The Government of the Anglo-Saxons.

CHAP. I.

The King's Election and Coronation.

IN treating of the Anglo-Saxon Government, it will be proper to begin with the cyning, or king, who, though he did not concentrate in himself the despotism of an eastern monarch, was yet elevated far above the rest of the nation in dignity, property, and power.

The witena-gemot may then be considered, and afterwards the official dignities respected by the nation. Our subject will be closed by a review of the contributions levied from the people.

The first cynings of the Anglo-Saxons seem to have been their war-kings, continued for life; and the crown was not hereditary, but elective. Many authors, both in the Anglo-Saxon times and afterwards, when speaking of their accessions, express them in terms which signify election. Thus,

CHAP.

I.

the contemporary author of Dunstan's life says of Edwin, "after him arose Eadwig, son of king Edmund, in age a youth, and with little of the prudence of reigning; *elected*, he filled up the number and names of the kings over both people." It proceeds afterwards to mention, that, abandoning Eadwig, they chose (*eligere*) Eadgar to be king.¹

It was the *witena-gemot* who elected the *cyning*. The council, in 785, directs, that "lawful kings be chosen by the priests and elders of the people."² The author of the life of Dunstan says, "when at the time appointed he was by all the chiefs of the English, by general election, to be anointed and consecrated king."³ Ethelred recites himself, in a charter, that all the *optimates* had unanimously chosen his brother Edward to rule the helm of the kingdom.⁴ Alfred is stated to have been chosen by the *ducibus et presulibus* of all the nation.⁵ Edward and Athelstan are also described as a *primatis electus*.⁶

Sometimes the election is mentioned as if other persons besides the *witan* were concerned in it. Thus, the Saxon Chronicle says, that after Ethelred's death all the *witan* who were in London, and *the citizens*, chose Edmund to cinge.⁷ It says afterwards, that when Canute died there was a *gemot* of all the *witan* at Oxford; and earl Leofric, and most of the *thegns* north of the Thames, and *the lithsmen* at London chose Harold. The earl Godwin, and all the *yldestan* men in West Saxony, opposed it as long as they could.⁸

But, from the comparison of all the passages on this subject, the result seems to be, that the king was elected at the *witena-gemot* held on the demise of the preceding sovereign.

That the accession of the Anglo-Saxon sovereigns was not governed by the rules of hereditary succession, is manifest from their history. The dynasties of Wessex were more steady

¹ MS. Cleop. B. 13. p. 76. 78.

² Spelm. Concil. p. 296.

³ MS. Cleop. p. 76.

⁴ MS. Claud. C. 9. p. 123.

⁵ Simeon. Duvel. 126, 127.

⁶ Ethelwerd, 847. Malmsb. 48.

⁷ Sax. Chron. p. 148.

⁸ Ibid. 154.

and regular than any others in the octarchy. Yet the son of its third king, Cealwin, did not succeed, though he existed. The son of Ceolwulf was equally passed by. Ceadwalla left two sons, yet Ina acceded, to their prejudice; and, what is singular, Ina was elected king, though his father was alive. Some other irregularities of the same sort took place before Egbert, and continued after him.

Ethelbert, the second son of Ethelwulph, left sons, and yet Ethelred succeeded in their stead. They were still excluded, when Alfred and his son received the crown. So Athelstan, though illegitimate, was chosen in preference to his legitimate brothers. On Edgar's death, both his eldest and youngest sons were made candidates for the crown, though Edward was preferred; and though Edmund Ironside left a son,¹ his brother, Edward the Confessor, after the Danish reigns, was preferred before him. To the exclusion of the same prince, Harold the Second obtained his election.

But though the Saxon witan continued the custom of election, and sometimes broke the regular line of descent, by crowning the collateral branches, yet in the greatest number of instances they followed the rule of hereditary succession. Their choice of the cyning in Wessex, even when the heir was disregarded, was always made from the family of its first founder, Cerdic, and usually from the kinsmen of the preceding sovereign. The Norman conquest terminated the power of the witena-gemot, and changed the crown from an elective to an hereditary succession—a change highly auspicious to the national prosperity.

The coronation of Ethelred the Second, and his coronation oath, have been transmitted to us in a MS. yet extant in the Cotton Library.* The ceremony was thus ordered:

“Two bishops, with the witan, shall lead him to the church, and the clergy, with the bishops, shall sing the anthem, ‘Firmetur manus tua,’ and the ‘Gloria Patri.’

* MS. Claud. A. 3.

“ When the king arrives at the church, he shall prostrate himself before the altar, and the ‘Te Deum’ shall be chanted.

“ When this is finished, the king shall be raised from the ground, and, *having been chosen* by the bishops and people, shall, with a clear voice, before God and all the people, promise that he will observe these three rules.”

The Coronation Oath.

‘ In the name of Christ, I promise three things to the Christian people, my subjects:

‘ First, That the church of God, and all the Christian people, shall always preserve true peace under our auspices.

‘ Second, That I will forbid rapacity and all iniquities to every condition.

‘ Third, That I will command equity and mercy in all judgments, that to me and to you, the gracious and merciful God may extend his mercy.’

“ All shall say Amen. These prayers shall follow, which the bishops are separately to repeat:

‘ We invoke thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty and Eternal God, that this thy servant (whom, by the wisdom of thy divine dispensations from the beginning of his formation to this present day, thou hast permitted to increase, rejoicing in the flower of youth) enriched with the gift of thy piety, and full of the grace of truth, thou mayest cause to be always advancing, day by day, to better things before God and men—That, rejoicing in the bounty of supernal grace, he may receive the throne of supreme power; and, defended on all sides from his enemies by the wall of thy mercy, he may deserve to govern happily the people committed to him with the peace of propitiation and the strength of victory.’

“ *Second Prayer.*”

‘ O God, who directest thy people in strength, and go-
 ‘ vernest them with love, give this thy servant such a spirit
 ‘ of wisdom with the rule of discipline, that, devoted to thee
 ‘ with his whole heart, he may remain in his government
 ‘ always fit, and that by thy favour the security of this church
 ‘ may be preserved in his time, and Christian devotion may
 ‘ remain in tranquillity; so that, persevering in good works,
 ‘ he may attain, under thy guidance, to thine everlasting
 ‘ kingdom.’

After a third prayer, the consecration of the king by the
 bishop takes place, who holds the crown over him, saying,

‘ Almighty Creator, Everlasting Lord, governor of heaven
 ‘ and earth, the maker and disposer of angels and men,
 ‘ King of kings and Lord of lords! who made thy faithful
 ‘ servant Abraham to triumph over his enemies, and gavest
 ‘ manifold victories to Moses and Joshua, the prelates of thy
 ‘ people; and didst raise David, thy lowly child, to the summit
 ‘ of the kingdom, and didst free him from the mouth of the
 ‘ lion and the paws of the bear, and from Goliah, and from
 ‘ the malignant sword of Saul and his enemies; who didst
 ‘ endow Solomon with the ineffable gift of wisdom and peace:
 ‘ look down propitiously on our humble prayers, and multiply
 ‘ the gifts of thy blessing on this thy servant, whom, with
 ‘ humble devotion, *we have chosen* to be king of the Angles
 ‘ and the Saxons. Surround him every where with the right
 ‘ hand of thy power, that, strengthened with the faithfulness
 ‘ of Abraham, the meekness of Moses, the courage of Joshua,
 ‘ the humility of David, and the wisdom of Solomon, he may
 ‘ be well-pleasing to thee in all things, and may always ad-
 ‘ vance in the way of justice with inoffensive progress.

‘ May he so nourish, teach, defend, and instruct the church
 ‘ of all the kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons, with the people
 ‘ annexed to it; and so potently and royally rule it against all

‘ visible and invisible enemies, that the royal throne of the
 ‘ Angles and Saxons may not desert his sceptre, but that he
 ‘ may keep their minds in the harmony of the pristine faith
 ‘ and peace! May he, supported by the due subjection of
 ‘ the people, and glorified by worthy love, through a long life,
 ‘ descend to govern and establish it with the united mercy of
 ‘ thy glory! Defended with the helmet and invincible shield
 ‘ of thy protection, and surrounded with celestial arms, may
 ‘ he obtain the triumph of victory over all his enemies, and
 ‘ bring the terror of his power on all the unfaithful, and shed
 ‘ peace on those joyfully fighting for thee! Adorn him with
 ‘ the virtues with which thou hast decorated thy faithful ser-
 ‘ vants; place him high in his dominion, and anoint him with
 ‘ the oil of the grace of thy Holy Spirit!’

“ Here he shall be ANOINTED with oil; and this anthem shall be sung:

‘ And Zadoc the priest, and Nathan the prophet, anointed
 ‘ Solomon king in Sion; and, approaching him, they said,
 ‘ May the king live for ever.’

After two appropriate prayers, the SWORD was given to him, with this invocation:

‘ God! who governest all things, both in heaven and in
 ‘ earth, by thy providence, be propitious to our most Christian
 ‘ king, that all the strength of his enemies may be broken
 ‘ by the virtue of the spiritual sword, and that thou com-
 ‘ bating for him, they may be utterly destroyed!’

“ The king shall here be CROWNED, and shall be thus ad-
 dressed:

‘ May God crown thee with the crown of glory, and with
 ‘ the honour of justice, and the labour of fortitude; that by
 ‘ the virtue of our benediction, and by a right faith, and the
 ‘ various fruit of good works, thou mayest attain to the crown
 ‘ of the everlasting kingdom, through His bounty whose king-
 ‘ dom endures for ever.’

“ After the crown shall be put upon his head, this prayer shall be said :

‘ God of eternity ! Commander of the virtues ! the Conqueror of all enemies ! bless this thy servant, now humbly bending his head before thee, and preserve him long in health, prosperity, and happiness. Whenever he shall invoke thine aid, be speedily present to him, and protect and defend him. Bestow on him the riches of thy grace ; fulfil his desires with every good thing, and crown him with thy mercy.’

“ The SCEPTRE shall be here given to him, with this address :

‘ Take the illustrious sceptre of the royal power, the rod of thy dominion, the rod of justice, by which mayest thou govern thyself well, and the holy church and Christian people committed by the Lord to thee ! Mayest thou with royal virtue defend us from the wicked ; correct the bad, and pacify the upright ; and that they may hold the right way, direct them with thine aid, so that from the temporal kingdom thou mayest attain to that which is eternal, by His aid whose endless dominion will remain through every age.’

“ After the sceptre has been given, this prayer follows :

‘ Lord of all ! Fountain of good ! God of all ! Governor of governors ! bestow on thy servant the dignity to govern well, and strengthen him, that he become the honour granted him by thee. Make him illustrious above every other king in Britain ! Enrich him with thine affluent benediction, and establish him firmly in the throne of his kingdom ! Visit him in his offspring, and grant him length of life ! In his day may justice be preeminent, so that, with all joy and felicity, he may be glorified in thine everlasting kingdom.’

“ The ROD shall be here given to him, with this address :

‘ Take the rod of justice and equity, by which thou mayest understand how to soothe the pious and terrify the bad ;

‘ teach the way to the erring; stretch out thine hand to the
 ‘ faltering; abase the proud; exalt the humble, that Christ
 ‘ our Lord may open to thee the door, who says of himself,
 ‘ ‘I am the door; if any enter through me, he shall be
 ‘ ‘saved.’ And HE who is the key of David, and the sceptre
 ‘ of the house of Israel, who opens and no one can shut;
 ‘ who shuts and no one can open; may he be thy helper! HE
 ‘ who bringeth the bounden from the prison-house, and the
 ‘ one sitting in darkness and the shadow of death! that in all
 ‘ things thou mayest deserve to follow him of whom David
 ‘ sang, ‘Thy seat, O God, endureth for ever; the sceptre of
 ‘ ‘thy kingdom is a right sceptre.’ Imitate him who says,
 ‘ ‘Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; there-
 ‘ ‘fore God, even thy God, has anointed thee with the oil of
 ‘ ‘gladness above thy fellows.’

The benedictions follow:

‘ May the Almighty Lord extend the right hand of his
 ‘ blessing, and pour upon thee the gift of his protection, and
 ‘ surround thee with a wall of happiness, and with the guar-
 ‘ dianship of his care; the merits of the holy Mary; of Saint
 ‘ Peter, the prince of the apostles; and of Saint Gregory, the
 ‘ apostle of the English; and of all the Saints, interceding
 ‘ for thee!

‘ May the Lord forgive thee all the evil thou hast done,
 ‘ and bestow on thee the grace and mercy which thou humbly
 ‘ askest of him; may he free thee from all adversity, and
 ‘ from all the assaults of visible or invisible enemies!

‘ May he place his good angels to watch over thee, that
 ‘ they always and every where may precede, accompany, and
 ‘ follow thee; and by his power may he preserve thee from
 ‘ sin, from the sword, and every accident and danger!

‘ May he convert thine enemies to the benignity of peace
 ‘ and love, and make thee gracious and amiable in every good
 ‘ thing; and may he cover those that persecute and hate thee

‘ with salutary confusion ; and may everlasting sanctification
‘ flourish upon thee !

‘ May he always make thee victorious and triumphant
‘ over thine enemies, visible or invisible ; and pour upon thy
‘ heart both the fear and the continual love of his holy
‘ name, and make thee persevere in the right faith and in
‘ good works ; granting thee peace in thy days, and with the
‘ palm of victory may he bring thee to an endless reign !

‘ And may he make them happy in this world, and the
‘ partakers of his everlasting felicity, who will to make thee
‘ king over his people !

‘ Bless, Lord, this elected prince, thou who rulest for ever
‘ the kingdoms of all kings.

‘ And so glorify him with thy blessing, that he may hold
‘ the sceptre of Solomon with the sublimity of a David,’ &c.

‘ Grant him, by thy inspiration, so to govern thy people,
‘ as thou didst permit Solomon to obtain a peaceful king-
‘ dom.’

“ *Designation of the State of the Kingdom.*

‘ Stand and retain now the state which you have hitherto
‘ held by paternal succession, with hereditary right, dele-
‘ gated to thee by the authority of Almighty God, and our
‘ present delivery, that is, of all the bishops and other ser-
‘ vants of God ; and in so much as thou hast beheld the clergy
‘ nearer the sacred altars, so much more remember to pay
‘ them the honour due, in suitable places. So may the
‘ Mediator of God and men confirm thee the mediator of
‘ the clergy and the common people, on the throne of this
‘ kingdom, and make thee reign with him in his eternal
‘ kingdom.’

This prayer follows :

‘ May the Almighty Lord give thee, from the dew of
‘ heaven, and the fatness of the earth, abundance of corn,
‘ wine, and oil ! May the people serve thee, and the tribes
‘ adore thee ! Be the lord of thy brothers, and let the sons

‘ of thy mother bow before thee: He who blesses thee shall
‘ be filled with blessings, and God will be thy helper: May
‘ the Almighty bless thee with the blessings of the heaven
‘ above, and in the mountains and the vallies; with the
‘ blessing of the deep below; with the blessing of the suckling
‘ and the womb; with the blessings of grapes and apples;
‘ and may the blessing of the ancient fathers, Abraham, Isaac,
‘ and Jacob, be heaped upon thee!

‘ Bless, Lord, the courage of this prince, and prosper the
‘ works of his hands; and by thy blessing may his land be
‘ filled with apples, with the fruits, and the dew of heaven,
‘ and of the deep below; with the fruit of the sun and moon;
‘ from the top of the ancient mountains, from the apples of
‘ the eternal hills, and from the fruits of the earth and its
‘ fulness!

‘ May the blessing of Him who appeared in the bush come
‘ upon his head, and may the full blessing of the Lord be upon
‘ his sons, and may he steep his feet in oil.

‘ With his horn, as the horn of the rhinoceros, may be blow
‘ the nations to the extremities of the earth; and may He
‘ who has ascended to the skies be his auxiliary for ever!’

“ Here the coronation ends.”

CHAP. II.

His Family and Officers.

THE Anglo-Saxon queen was crowned, as well as the king, until the reign of Egbert, when this honour was taken from her. The crimes of the preceding queen, Eadburga, occasioned the Anglo-Saxons to depart awhile, in this respect, from the custom of all the German nations.¹ But it was soon restored, for Ethelwulph, on his second marriage, suffered his queen, Judith, to be crowned. An account of the ceremony of her coronation has been preserved by the old Frankish writers.²

CHAP.

II.

The custom was not immediately reassumed in England, because the expressions of Asser imply, that in Alfred's time the disuse of the coronation continued. But, by the time of the second Ethelred, it was restored; for after the account of his coronation, the ceremonial of her coronation follows.—She was anointed, and, after a prayer, a ring was given to her, and then she was crowned.³

The queen's name is joined with the cyning's in some charters, and it is not unusual to find them signed by her. She had her separate property; for, in a gift of land by Ethelswitha, the queen of Alfred, she gives fifteen manentes, calling them a part of the land of her own power.⁴ She had also officers of her own household; for the persons, with whose consent and testimony she made the grant, are called her nobles.

The king's sons had lands appropriated for them, even though under age; for Ethelred says, that, on his brother

¹ Asser. Vit. Alfr. p. 10, 11.

² Cott. MS. Claud. A. 3.

³ It may be seen in Du Chesne's Collection of the Frankish Historians, t. ii. p. 423.

⁴ MS. Cland. C. 9. p. 105.

BOOK
X.

being elected king, "the nobles delivered to me, for my use, "the lands belonging to the king's sons;" these, on the death of the princes, or on their accession to the sovereignty, became the property of the king; for he adds, "my brother dying, I "assumed the dominion, both of the royal lands, and of "those belonging to the king's sons."

Among the royal household we find the disc thegn, or the thegn of his dishes; the hregal thegn, or the thegn of his wardrobe; his hors thegn, or the thegn of his stud; his camerarius, or chamberlain; his propincenarius and pincerna, or cup-bearer; his secretaries; his chancellor; and, in an humbler rank, his mægden, his grindende theowa, his fedesl, his ambiht-smith, his horswealh, his geneat, and his laadrinc. The executive officers of his government will be mentioned hereafter.

* MS. Claud. C. 9. p. 123.

CHAP. III.

The Dignity and Prerogatives of the Anglo-Saxon Cyning.

THE authorities already adduced on the nature of the government of the Saxons on the continent, lead us to infer, that when Hengist, Ella, Cerdic, and Ida invaded Britain, they and the other chiefs who succeeded in establishing themselves in the island, came with the rank of war-kings, whose power was to continue while hostilities existed.

CHAP.

III.

But to rule a territory extorted by violence from angry natives, who were perpetually struggling to regain it, could scarcely admit of any deposition of the kingly office. The same power and dignity which were requisite to obtain victory, were equally wanted, while the hostility lasted, to preserve its conquests. It is, therefore, probable, that the first Anglo-Saxon chieftains and their successors were, from necessity and utility, continued on the throne till the kingly dignity became an established, a legal, and a venerated institution.

The circumstance, that these war-kings and their associates invaded and conquered the dominions of petty British kings, was also favourable to the establishment of continued royalty. When the British king fell, or retreated before the Saxon war-king, all his advantages became the spoil of his conquerors. The Saxon chief naturally succeeded to the British, the Saxon nobles to the British nobles, and the other invading warriors to the possessions of the free part of the native community.

It is certain, that in the earliest periods of the Anglo-Saxon history, we find the cyning, or king, and all the four orders of noble, free, freed, and servile. Their conversion to Christianity introduced another class, of monks and clergy.

The power and prerogatives of the Anglo-Saxon cyning were progressively acquired. As the nation had no written

constitution, their government was that of ancient custom, gradually altered from its original features by the new circumstances which occurred. In the course of time, the augmentation of the power of the cyning became indispensable to the happiness of the nation. What could arrange the contentions of right, property, and power, between equal nobles, or between them and the free, and afterwards between them and the church;—what could protect the infant state from British hostility, ever jealous, ever bickering, and ever to be mistrusted, but such an institution as continued royalty—as a cyning, raised in dignity and power above all the other chieftains; who could see the laws of the society executed, and their various rights adjusted; to whom every rank could effectually appeal, and who was the protector of every order of the state from violence and wrong?

We have seen that the land swarmed with independent land proprietors of various denominations, whose privileges were not uniform; but whose jurisdictions were generally peculiar and independent. What but a king could, in their age, and with their customs, have rescued the nation from a New Zealand state of general warfare? The institution of the cyning was, therefore, an admirable device, adapted to promote the common interest. It maintained peace between the turbulent chieftains. It insured to every order the enjoyment of its immunities. It was the source whence legal justice was administered to all; and perhaps no single incident tended more to accelerate the Anglo-Saxon civilization, than the character and prerogatives of the cyning, moderated by the continuance of the witenagemots, and the free spirit of the people.

It is extremely difficult to describe accurately his privileges and power. As a child of warfare, he must at first have been often arbitrary, acting with no rule but his own judgment and will, wherever he had the power. As the supreme chief of many other chieftains, whose rights were as sacred as his dig-

nity may have been popular, his authority must have been extremely circumscribed. Much of his power at first depended on his personal character and talents. Thus Eadbald had less authority in Kent than his father;¹ while Edwin, in Northumbria, attained to such power that he had the banner carried before him, not only in battle, but also in his excursions with his ministers through his kingdom, which seems to have been an assumption of dignity and state unknown before.² So, Oswin was so beloved for his amiable conduct, that the noblest men of his provinces came from every part to attend and serve him.³

The growth of the kingly prerogatives was favoured not only by the energy and talents of the prosperous sovereigns, but also by the natural tendency of such a power to accumulate. The crown was a permanent establishment, which it was the interest of every one but the superior nobles, to maintain and to aggrandize, till its power became formidable enough to be felt in its oppressions. Its domains were increasing by every successful war, and its revenue, privileges, and munificence, were perpetually adding to its wealth and influence.

When the zeal of the popes had completed the conversion of the island, and an hierarchy was established, the kingly power received great support and augmentation from the religious veneration with which the clergy surrounded it. That the church, in its weakness, should support the crown, which was its best protector, was a circumstance as natural as that it should afterwards oppose it, when its aggressions became feared.

The laws of Ethelbert, the first Christian king of Kent, who was converted about 600, are the most ancient specimens of the Anglo-Saxon legislation which remain to us. In these,⁴ the cyning appears already distinguished by a superior rank and privileges. While the mund-byrd of a ceorl was valued

¹ Bede, l. ii. c. 6.

² Ib. c. 16.

³ Ib. l. iii. c. 14.

⁴ Wilk. Leg. Sax. p. 1—7.

at six scillinga, the king's was appointed at fifty. The mulct on homicide in an eorle's residence was twelve scillinga; in a king's fifty. A double penalty was inflicted for injuries done where the cyning was drinking. An offence with his female was punished by a fine of fifty scillinga, while the eorle's occasioned only twelve, and a ceorl's but six. So, though a freeman's theft from a freeman incurred a treble satisfaction, his purloining the king's property was to be nine times compensated.

Another impressive and profitable token of superiority was, that some of the mulcts on offences were paid to him. Thus, if any harm was done to the leode, or people, when the king called them together, the compensation was to be double, and fifty scillinga were to be paid to the king. If any one killed a free man, the king had a similar sum as his lord. If a free man stole from others of the same condition, the penalty was to be the king's. If a pregnant woman was forced away, the king had fifteen scillinga.

In the laws of Ina we see the cyning mentioned in a style of authority very much resembling that of subsequent sovereigns. He says, "I Ina, by the grace of God king of the West Saxons." He uses the phrase "*my* bishops." He calls the nobles "*my* ealdormen," and "the oldest sages of *my* people." He adds, "I was consulting on the health of *our* soul and the establishment of *our* kingdom, that right laws, and right cyne domas (kingly judgments), through *our* people, might be settled and confirmed, and that no ealdorman, and none of *our* subjects should violate *our* laws." The laws then are introduced with "*We* command."

One of the provisions in these laws shews the king in the same authoritative and dignified features. "If any one fight in the king's house, he shall forfeit *all* his property, and it shall remain for the king's decision whether he shall have his life or not."⁶ The difference between this offence and

⁵ Wilk. Leg. Sax. p. 14.⁶ Ibid. p. 16.

quarrels elsewhere was very great; for a battle in the church, and in an ealdorman's house, was punished by a fine of 120 scillinga only.

The epithets given by the pope to the first Christian king of the Anglo-Saxons were, "the glorious," and "the most glorious." In several of their letters, the phrase "Your glory" is used as synonymous with our expression of "your majesty." The same epithet of "most glorious" is applied by Aldhelm, the king of Cornwall, and by an abbot, to the Frankish king.⁷ But this epithet was rather the complimentary language of the day, than a phrase appropriated to royalty; for Alphuald, king of East Anglia, writing to Boniface, styles the mitred missionary, "Domino gloriosissimo." A pope, in 634, addresses the king of Northumbria as Your Excellency. Boniface, to the king of Mercia, says, "We intreat the clemency of your highness." On another occasion, his superscription is more rhetorical: "To Ethelbald, king, my dearest lord, and in the love of Christ to be preferred to other kings, governing the illustrious sceptre of the empire of the Angles."⁸ Another address of the same sort in Saxon occurs in a monk's dedication of a saint's life; "To my most loved lord above the earthly kings of all other men, Alfwold, king of the East Angles, ruling his kingdom with right and with dignity."⁹

The titles which the ancient Saxon kings assumed in their charters may be briefly noticed:—"I, Æthelbald, by the divine dispensation, king of the Mercians." The powerful Offa simply writes, "Offa, king of the Mercians." Another; "Kenulph, by God's mercy, king of the Mercians." Witlaf's, Burtulph's, and Beorred's, are as unassuming. In the same spirit, Ethelwulph calls himself merely Rex West Saxonum. The style, in which Edgar chose to be mentioned, is usually very pompous and rhetorical.

⁷ Bonif. Letters, 16 Mag. Bib. 65. 85. ⁸ Bonif. Letters, 16 Mag. Bib. ⁹ MS.

Alfred's exordium to his laws is as dignified as Ina's:
 " I, Ælfred, cyning, gathered together and have commanded
 " to be written, many of those things that our forefathers
 " held which pleased *me*; and many of those things that liked
 " *me* not, *I* have thrown aside, with the advice of my witan,
 " and other things have commanded to be holden."¹⁰

The subsequent kings, in the same manner, promulged the laws in their own name, with the advice of their witan.

The prerogatives and influence in society of the cyning were great. He was to be prayed for, and voluntarily honoured;¹¹ his word was to be taken without an oath;¹² he had the high prerogative of pardoning in certain cases;¹³ his mund-byrd and his Were were larger than those of any other class in society;¹⁴ his safety was protected by high penalties for offences committed in his presence or habitation, or against his family;¹⁵ he had the lordship of the free;¹⁶ he had the option to sell over sea, to kill, or to take the were of a freeman thief; also to sell a theow over sea, or take a penalty;¹⁷ he could mitigate penalties;¹⁸ and could remit them;¹⁹ he had a sele, or tribunal, before whom thieves were brought;²⁰ he had a tribunal in London;²¹ his tribunal was the last court of appeal;²² he was the executive superintendant of the general laws, and usually received the fines attached to crimes.²³ The Jews were his property;²⁴ the high executive officers, the ealdormen, the gerefas, the thegns, and others, were liable to be displaced by him.²⁵ He convoked the councils of the witan,²⁶ and summoned the people to the army, which he commanded.

His property, on the dissolution of the octarchy, was very extensive in every part of England: Just before Alfred acceded to the crown, there were four kings reigning over the

¹⁰ Wilk. Leg. Sax. p. 34. ¹¹ Ib. p. 10.

¹² Ib. p. 11. ¹³ Ib. p. 20. 65.

¹⁴ Ib. 71, 72. ¹⁵ Ib. 22.

¹⁶ Ib. 2. ¹⁷ Ib. 12.

¹⁸ Ib. 77. ¹⁹ Spelm. Conc. p. 485.

²⁰ Wilk. Leg. Sax. 8. ²¹ Ib. p. 10.

²² Domesday in loc.

²³ Heming. Chart. 1. p. 265.

²⁴ Wilk. Leg. Sax. 47.

²⁵ Ib. 109. 122. ²⁶ Ib. 109.

Anglo-Saxons—the kings of Wessex, Mercia, East Anglia, and Northumbria. These four sovereignties had absorbed the other four. But when the sword of the Northmen had destroyed the dynasties of Mercia, East Anglia, and Northumbria, and when the invaders had themselves bent to the power of Alfred, then the Anglo Saxon cyning rose into great power and property, because the royal power and property of the subdued kingdoms became the right of the ruling king. Alfred united in himself all the regal possessions in England, except those which he allowed the Danish princes to retain in Northumbria and East Anglia. The Northmen were completely subdued by Athelstan; and when this event took place, the cyning of England became the possessor of all the prerogatives and property which the eight kings of the octarchy had enjoyed. It was this concentration of wealth and privileges, and its consequences, which exalted the cyning to that majesty and power which, in the later periods of the Anglo-Saxon dynasty, became attached to the throne.

The royal property consisted of lands in demesne in every part of England; and though in the lapse of time he had given large possessions to his friends and followers, yet from many he reserved rents and services which were a great source of wealth and power. The places which occur with the denomination of royal towns, or royal villas, are very numerous, and among these we may notice the name of Windeshore (Windsor), which is still a regal residence.

His revenues were the rents and produce of his lands in demesne; customs in the sea-ports; tolls in the markets, and in the cities on sales; duties and services to be paid to him in the burghs, or to be commuted for money; wites, or penalties and forfeitures, which the law attached to certain crimes and offences; heriots from his thanes, and various payments and benefits arising to him on the circumstances stated in the laws.

His dignity and influence were displayed and upheld by

his liberality, of which specimens will be given in another place.

But all the prerogatives and rights of the Anglo-Saxon cyning were definite and ascertained. They were such as had become established by law or custom, and could be as little exceeded by the sovereign, as withheld by his people. They were not arbitrary privileges of an unknown extent. Even William the Conqueror found it necessary to have an official survey of the royal rights taken in every part of the kingdom; and we find the hundred, or similar bodies, in every county making the inquisition to the king's commissioners, who returned to the sovereign that minute record of his claims upon his subjects, which constitutes the Domesday-book. The royal claims in Domesday-book were, therefore, not the arbitrary impositions of the throne, but were those which the people themselves testified to their king to have been his legal rights. Perhaps no country in Europe can exhibit such an ancient record of the freedom of its people, and the limited prerogatives of its ruler.

The military force was under the command of the king, while it was assembled. It was rather a militia than a regular army. We have already given some notices of its nature: from a certain quantity of land, a fixed number of soldiers were sent, when the king summoned his people to an expedition, who were bound to serve under him for a certain time, apparently two months. Thus, in Berkshire, "when the king sent any where his army, one soldier went from every five hides, and for his victuals or his pay every hide gave him four shillings for two months. This money was not transmitted to the king, but to the soldiers. If any one, after he was summoned to the expedition, did not go, he forfeited to the king all his land. If any who had the right of staying at home promised to send a substitute, and the substitute did not go, the penalty was fifty shillings." In Wiltshire, "When the king went on an expedition by land

“ or sea, he had from Wilton burgh either twenty shillings to
“ feed his buzecarlos, or led one man with him for the honour
“ of five hides.” A curious instance of tenure on military
service occurs in Heming’s Chartularium. The prior of a
monastery gave a villa to a miles for life, on condition of his
serving for the monastery for it, in the expeditions by sea and
land, which then frequently took place.

By the laws, persons were forbidden to join the fyrd, or
expedition, without the king’s leave. To depart from it
without permission, when the king commanded, was still more
severely punished. The loss of life, and the forfeiture of all
the offender’s property, was the consequence.

The scip fyrd, or naval expedition, was ordered to be always
so accelerated as to be ready every year soon after Easter.

It was enacted, that whoever destroyed or injured the
people’s fyrd scip should carefully compensate it, and to the
king the mund.²⁷

So early as in the time of Ina, it was provided that if a
sith-cund man, having land, neglected the fyrd, he should pay
one hundred and twenty shillings, and forfeit his land. If he
had no land, he was to pay sixty shillings. A ceorl paid
thirty shillings as a fyrd-wite.²⁸

²⁷ Wilk. Leg. Sax. 122.

²⁸ Ib. 23.

CHAP. IV.

*The Witena-Gemot.*BOOK
X.

THE gemot of the witan was the great council of the Anglo-Saxon nation; their legislative and supreme judicial assembly. As the highest judicial court of the kingdom, they resembled our present House of Lords. And in those periods, when the peers of the realm represented territorial property rather than hereditary dignities, the comparison between the Saxon witena-gemot and the upper house of our modern parliament might have been more correctly made in their legislative capacity. The German states are recorded by Tacitus to have had national councils,¹ and the continental Saxons are also stated to have possessed them.²

When the cyning was only the temporary commander of the nation, for the purposes of war, whose function ceased when peace returned, the witena-gemot must have been the supreme authority of the nation. But when the cyning became an established and permanent dignity, whose privileges and power were perpetually increasing till he attained the majestic prerogatives and widely-diffused property which Athelstan and Edgar enjoyed, the witena-gemot then assumed a secondary rank in the state. We will endeavour to delineate its nature and powers with fidelity, adopting no theory, but carefully following the lights which the Saxon documents afford to us.

The topics of our inquiry will be these:

What its members were styled.

Of whom it was composed.

By whom convened.

The times of its meetings.

¹ Tacitus de Morib. Germ. ² Fabricius Hist. Sax. 64, 69. Chronographus Saxo, p. 115.

The place.

Its business.

Its power.

CHAP.
IV.

The gemot and its members have various appellations in the writings of our ancestors. In their vernacular tongue they have been styled, The witen-gemot; the Engla rædgifan (council-givers); the witan; the Eadigra geheahtendlic ymcyme (the illustrious assembly of the wealthy); the Eadigan (the wealthy); the mycel synoth (great synod).³

In the Latin phrases applied to them by our forefathers they have been called optimates; principes; primates; procures; concionatores Angliæ, and such like.⁴

The kings, who allude to them in their grants, call them, My witan; meorum sapientum archontum; heroicorum virorum; conciliatorum meorum; meorum omnium episcoporum et principum optimatum meorum; optimatibus nostris.⁵ All these are various phrases to express the same thing. With reference to their presumed wisdom, they were called witan; with reference to their rank and property, they were styled eadigan, optimates, principes, procures, &c.

As to the composition of the witen-gemot, no minute information can be given, though some circumstances may be stated. The general terms that are used, imply wise men, great men, counsellors, and senators. Sometimes the expressions are more discriminating; as, "all my bishops, princes, and great men;—the wise men, bishops, ealdormen, and all the nobility;—all the bishops, chiefs, and all the best men of this kingdom in an unanimous legal council."⁶ One grant, which says, "with the consent of all my optimates, as well ecclesiastical as civil, whose names follow according to their dignity," is signed by the king, one archbishop,

³ Sax. Chron. 154. MS. Claud. A. 3. ⁵ Heming. Chart. 2. 41. 57. MS. Claud. Sax. Chron. 148. Alfred's Will. Wilkins, C. 9. 103. 112, 113. &c.

76. 102. Ib. p. 10. p. 72, &c.

⁴ Ethelward, 847. Hem. Chart. p. 15. ⁶ Heming. Chart. p. 57. 93. Claud. C. 9. 17. 23. MS. Claud. MS. Cleop. 3 Gale, p. 124. 484, 5, &c.

fourteen bishops, the king's mother, the king's four sons, sixteen abbots, and three dukes.⁷ In another, where similar expressions are used, we find the king, two archbishops, four bishops, one abbot, seven dukes, and twenty-five ministri.⁸ Some grants are signed by most laymen, and some by most ecclesiastics. The gemots of the witan, no doubt, varied as our parliaments vary in the number and quality of the persons who from time to time attend. One grant, stating "all the primates of all my kingdom, knowing it, whose names are underwritten," is signed by the following persons: "the king, two archbishops, eleven bishops, the queen, eleven abbots, nine dukes, and twenty-six milites."⁹

In a great council in the year 716, the king of Kent was present, the archbishop of Canterbury, the bishop of Rochester, and abbots, *abbesses*, presbyters, deacons, dukes, and satraps. Among the names subscribed to the record of this council are five abbesses.¹⁰ In another great council, held in 811, at London, the king, an archbishop, two bishops, together with princes, dukes, et majores natu, are mentioned, who are afterwards stated again with the additional expression of Judices. It says their names were subscribed to the grant. These appear to be the king, the queen, a subordinate king, an archbishop, three bishops, three princes, three dukes, two officers called propincerna ejus and pedissecus, two abbots, and a presbyter.¹¹ Another council, in 824, is subscribed by the king, eight bishops, one signing himself *electus*, four abbots, thirteen dukes, one pedissecus.¹²

Most of those whose names are subscribed to councils or charters, and who appear to have been the witan who constituted the gemot, have some titles after their names. If they were clergy, they are styled either archbishop, bishop, abbot, presbyter, or deacon. If they were laymen, we find

⁷ MS. Cl. C. 9. p. 122. ⁸ MS. Claud. B. 471.

⁹ 3 Gale's Script. 517.

¹⁰ Astle's MS. Charters, No. 2.

¹¹ Ib. No. 8. The expression majores

natu does not here, I think, mean eldest son, but is synonymous with the Saxon term ealders.

¹² Astle's MS. Ch. No. 12.

the additions of princeps, duces, comes, ealdorman, minister or miles, or a specific title of household office, as disc thegn and hrægel thegn. There are, however, some grants which have names without any addition.

C H A P.
IV.

We know what was necessary to exalt a ceorl to a thegn, but we cannot distinctly ascertain all the qualifications which entitled persons to a seat in the witen-gemot. There is, however, one curious passage which ascertains that a certain amount of property was an indispensable requisite, and that acquired property would answer this purpose as well as hereditary property. The possession here stated to be necessary was forty hides of land. The whole incident is so curious as to be worth transcribing.—Guddmund desired in matrimony the daughter of a great man, but because he had not the lordship of forty hides of land, he could not, though noble, be reckoned among the procures; and therefore she refused him. He went to his brother, the abbot of Ely, complaining of his misfortune. The abbot fraudulently gave him possessions of the monastery sufficient to make up the deficiency. This circumstance attests that nobility alone was not sufficient for a seat among the witan, and that forty hides of land was an indispensable qualification.¹³

It would be highly interesting to know whether they who possessed this quantity of land had thereby the right of being in the witen-gemot, or whether the members of this great council were elected from the territorial proprietors, and sat as their representatives. I am not able to decide this curious question. But I cannot avoid mentioning one person's designation, which seems to have the force of expressing an *elected* member. Among the persons signing to the act of the gemot at Clofeshoe in 824 is "Ego Beonna *electus* consent. et "subscrib."¹⁴

They were convened by the king's writ. Several passages in the writers of this period mention that they assembled at

¹³ 3 Gale's Script. p. 513.

¹⁴ Astle's MS. Charters, No. 12.

the summons of the king. "On a paschal solemnity all the
"greater men, the clergy and the laity of all the land, met
"at the king's court, to celebrate the festival *called by him*."

In 1048, the Saxon Chronicle says, "the king *sent* after all
"his witan, and bade them come to Gloucester a little after
"the feast of Saint Mary."¹⁶ In one MS. in the year 993,
the king says, "I ordered a synodale council to be held at
"Winton on the day of Pentecost."¹⁷

The times of their meeting seem to have been usually the
great festivals of the church, as Christmas, Easter, and Whit-
suntide; and of these, if we may judge, by its being more
frequently mentioned, Easter was the favorite period. But
their meetings were not confined to these seasons; for we find
that they sometimes took place in the middle of Lent,¹⁸ near
the feast of Saint Mary,¹⁹ July,²⁰ September, and October.²¹

The place of their assembly was not fixed. After Egbert's
accession, the gemot was convened at London, at Kingston,
at Wilton, Winton, Clofeshoe, Dorchester, Cyrneceaster, Calne,
Ambresbury, Oxford, Gloucester, Æthelwaraburh, Kyrtlene-
gum, and other places.²² Perhaps the place of their meeting
depended on the king's residence at the time, and was fixed
by his convenience.

Our monarchs seem to have maintained their influence in
the witena-gemots by their munificence. One account of their
meeting in the time of Edgar is thus given: "All England
"rejoicing in the placid leisure of tranquil peace, it hap-
"pened that on a certain paschal solemnity all the majores
"of all the country, as well clergy as laymen, of both orders
"and professions, met at the royal court called by him to
"celebrate the festivity, and to be honoured by him with
"royal gifts. Having celebrated the divine mysteries with

¹⁵ 3 Gale's Script. 395.

¹⁶ Sax. Chron. p. 163.

¹⁷ MS. Claud. C. 9. p. 122.

¹⁸ Sax. Chron. 161. ¹⁹ Ib. 163.

²⁰ Astle's MS. Chart. No. 2.

²¹ Sax. Chron. 164. Heming. Chart. 50.

²² Sax. Chron. 142. 161. 168. 124. 128.
163. 146. Heming. 93. MS. Cott. Aug. 2.

20. Astle's MS. Chart. No. 8. No. 12.
MS. Cleop. B. 13. MS. Claud. C. 9. 121.

“all alacrity and joy, all went to the palace to refresh their
“bodies. Some days having been passed away, the king’s
“hall resounded with acclamations. The streets murmured
“with the busy hum of men. None felt entirely a refusal of
“the royal munificence; for all were magnificently rewarded
“with presents of various sort and value, in vessels, vestments,
“or the best horses.”²³

These royal gifts are mentioned in a carta of Kenulf, dated 811, in which he states, that to the consecration of the church at Winchelcomb, *he had called* the optimates, bishops, princes, eorls, and *procuratores* of the Mercians, with his relations and two minor kings. He adds, that to all the archontes of Mercia, and of the other provinces, he had given many presents in gold, silver, and in household goods, and select horses, to every one according to his rank; and that to all those who had no land, he gave a pound in the present silver and gold, and to every presbyter a mare, and to every servant of God a shilling. He mentions likewise that he had made these presents, on the condition that his inheritance might continue with him and his heirs the more firmly and securely.²⁴

The king presided at the witena-gemots, and sometimes, perhaps always, addressed them. In 993 we have this account of a royal speech. The king says, in a charter which recites what had passed at one of their meetings, “I benignantly
“addressed to them salutary and pacific words. I admo-
“nished all—that those things which were worthy of the
“Creator, and serviceable to the health of my soul, or to
“my royal dignity, and which ought to prevail as proper for
“the English people, they might, with the Lord’s assistance,
“discuss in common.”²⁵ The speech of Edgar, in favour of the monks, has been noticed before.²⁶

It has been already stated, that one of their duties was to elect the sovereign, and to assist at his coronation. Another

²³ 3 Gale’s Script. p. 395.

²⁴ Dugd. Mon. Angl. i. p. 189.

²⁵ MS. Claud. C. 9. p. 122.

²⁶ 1st Vol. of this Hist. p. 398.

was to co-operate with the king in making laws. Thus Bede says, of the earliest laws we have, that Ethelbert established them "with the counsel of his wise men."²⁷ The introductory passages of the Anglo-Saxon laws which exist, usually express that they were made with the concurrence of the witan.

The witenagemot appears also to have made treaties jointly with the king; for the treaty with Guthrun and the Danes thus begins: "This is the treaty which Ælfred, king, and Gythrun, king, and all the witan of England, and all the people in East Anglia, (that is, the Danes) have made and fastened with oaths."²⁸ In 1011, it is said that the king and his witan sent to the Danes and desired peace, and promised tribute and supply.²⁹ On another occasion, the Saxon Chronicle states, that the king sent to the hostile fleet an ealdorman, who, with the word of the king and his witan, made peace with them.³⁰ In 1016, it expresses that Eadric, the ealdorman, and the witan who were there counselled, that the kings (Edmund and Canute) should make peace between them." In 1002, the king ordered, and his witan, the money to be paid to the Danes, and peace to be made.³² The treaty, printed in Wilkins' *Leges Anglo-Saxonicae*, p. 104. is said to have been made by the king and his witan.

They are also mentioned to us as assisting the king in directing the military preparations of the kingdom. Thus, in 992, the Saxon Chronicle says, that "the king ordered, and all his witan, that man should gather together all the ships that were to go to London."³³ In 999, the king, with his witan, ordered that both the ship fyrde and the land fyrde should be led against the Danes.³⁴ So, in 1052, the king decreed, and his witan, that man should proceed with the

²⁷ Bede, l. ii. c. 5.²⁸ Wilkins' *Leg. Angl.* 47.²⁹ *Sax. Chron.* 140.³⁰ *Ib.* 132.³¹ *Sax. Chron.* 150.³² *Ib.* 132.³³ *Ib.* 126.³⁴ *Ib.* 130.

ships to Sandwich; and they set Raulf, eorl, and Oddan, eorl, to heafod-mannum (to be the head-men) thereto.³⁵

CHAP.
IV.

Impeachments of great men were made before the witenagemot. Some instances may be concisely narrated. In 1043, the king, conceiving that he had cause of complaint against the family of the famous Godwin, convened the witenagemot. The family armed. The witan ordered that both sides should desist from hostilities, and that the king should give God's peace and his full friendship to both sides. Then the king and his witan directed another witenagemot to be assembled at London on the next harvest equinox, and the king ordered the army on the south and north of the Thames to be bannan.

At this gemot, eorl Swain, one of Godwin's sons, was declared an utlah (outlaw); and Godwin and his other son, Harold, were cited to attend the gemot as speedily as possible. They approached, and desired peace and hostages, that they might come into the gemot and quit it without treachery. They were again cited, and they repeated their demand. Hostages were refused them, and five days of safety only were allowed them to leave the country. They obeyed, and went exiles into Flanders.³⁶

We have another instance of the great council both banishing and pardoning. A great gemot, in 1052, was assembled at London, which "all the eorls and the best men in the country" attended. There Godwin made his defence, and purged himself before his lord the king and all the people, that he was guiltless of the crime charged on him and his sons. The king forgave him and his family, and restored them their possessions and the earldom. But the archbishop and all the Frenchmen were banished.³⁷

The same power was exerted in 1055. A witenagemot was assembled seven days before Mid-Lent, and eorl Elfgar was outlawed for high treason, or, as it is expressed, because

³⁵ Sax. Chron. 165.

³⁶ Ib. 164.

³⁷ Ib. 168.

he was a swica, a betrayer of the king and all his people. His earldom was given to another.³⁸

So all the optimates meeting at Cynceaster, in the reign of Ethelred, banished Elfric for high treason, and confiscated all his possessions to the king.³⁹

At a great council, held in 716, one of their main objects is expressed to have been to examine anxiously into the state of the churches and monasteries in Kent, and their possessions.⁴⁰

At these councils, grants of land were made and confirmed. The instances of this are innumerable. Thus, in 811, Cenwulf, at a very great council convened in London, gave some lands of his own right, with the advice and consent of the said council.⁴¹ It would be almost endless to enumerate all the grants which we know of, where the consent of the council is stated.

At the council in 716, they forbade any layman taking anything from the monastery therein named; and they freed the lands belonging to it from various impositions and payments.⁴²

At the council in 824, they inquired into the necessities of the secular deputies, as well as into the monasterial disciplines, and into the ecclesiastical morals. Here a complaint was made by the archbishop, that he had been unjustly deprived of some land. He cited those who withheld it. The writings concerning the land were produced, and *viva voce* evidence heard. The writings and the land were ordered by the council to be given to the archbishop.⁴³

At a council in 903, an ealdorman stated that his title deeds had been destroyed by fire. He applied to the council for leave to have new ones. New ones were ordered to be made out to him, as nearly similar to the former as memory could make them.⁴⁴

³⁸ Sax. Chron. 169.

³⁹ MS. Claud. C. 9. 123, 124.

⁴⁰ Astle's MS. Chart. No. 2.

⁴¹ Astle's MS. Chart. No. 8.

⁴² Ib. No. 2.

⁴³ Ib. No. 12 ⁴⁴ Ib. No. 21.

What was done at one council was sometimes confirmed at another. Thus what was done in the great council in Baccanfield was confirmed in the same year at another held in July at Cloveshoh. So a gift at Easter was confirmed at Christmas.⁴⁵

That the witenagemot sometimes resisted the royal acts, appears from their not choosing to consider valid a gift of land by Baldred, king of Kent, because he did not please them.⁴⁶

The witenagemot frequently appears to us, in the Saxon remains, as the high court of judicature of the kingdom.

In 896, Æthelred, the ealdorman of Mercia, convened all the witan of Mercia, (which had not yet been reduced into a province) the bishops, ealdormen, and all the nobility, at Gloucester, with the leave of Alfred. "They consulted how they most justly might hold their theod-scipe, both for God and for the world, and right many men, both clergy and laity, concerning the lands, and other things, that were detained." At this gemot, the bishop of Worcester made his complaint of the wood-land of which he was deprived. All the witan declared that the church should have its rights preserved, as well as other persons. A discussion and an accommodation took place.⁴⁷

In another case of disputed lands, the bishop states, that he could obtain no right before Ethelred was lord of Mercia. He assembled the witan of Mercia at Saltwic, about manifold needs, both ecclesiastical and civil. "Then (says the bishop) I spoke of the monastery with the erfe ge write, (conveyances of the land) and desired my right. Then Eadnoth, and Alfred, and Ælfstan, pledged me that they would either give it to me, or would, among their kinsfolk, find a man who would take it on the condition of being obedient to me." No man, however, would take the land.

⁴⁵ Astle's MS. Chart. No. 2. and MS. Claud. C. 9. 124.

⁴⁶ Spelm. Conc. p. 340.

⁴⁷ Heming. Chart. I. p. 93.

on these terms, and the parties came to an accommodation on the subject.⁴⁸

In 851, the monks of Croyland, having suffered much from some violent neighbours, laid their complaint before the witena-gemot. The king ordered the sheriff of Lincoln, and his other officers in that district, to take a view of the lands of the monastery, and to make their report to him and his council, wherever they should be, at the end of Easter. This was done, and the grievances were removed.⁴⁹

Taxation.

The power of the witena-gemot over the public gelds of the kingdom, we cannot detail. The lands of the Anglo-Saxons, the burghs, and the people, appear to us, in all the documents of our ancestors, as subjected to certain definite payments to the king as to their lords; and we have already stated, that by a custom, whose origin is lost in its antiquity, among the Anglo-Saxons, all their lands, unless specially exempted, were liable to three great burdens, the building and reparation of bridges and fortifications, and to military expeditions. But what we now call taxation, seems to have begun in the time of Ethelred, and to have arisen from the evils of a foreign invasion. Henry of Huntingdon, speaking of the payment of ten thousand pounds to the Danes, to buy off their hostility, says, "This evil has lasted to our days, and long will continue, unless the mercy of God interferes; for we now (in the twelfth century) pay that to our kings from custom, which was paid to the Danes from unspeakable terror."⁵⁰ This payment, and those which followed, are stated to have been ordered by the king and the witena-gemot.⁵¹

Under sovereigns of feeble capacity, the witena-gemot seems to have been the scene of those factions which always attend both aristocracies and democracies, when no com-

⁴⁸ Heming. Chart. 1. p. 120.

⁴⁹ Ingulf, p. 12.

⁵⁰ Hen. Hunt. 1. 5. p. 357. Bromton,

Chron. p. 879. Ingulf also complains heavily of these exactions, p. 55.

⁵¹ Sax. Chron. 126. 132. 136. 140. 142.

manding talents exist to predominate in the discussions, and to shape the council.

CHAP.
IV.

The reigns of Ethelred the Second, and of the Confessor, were distinguished by the turbulence, and even treason of the nobles. Of the former, our Malmsbury writes, "When-
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BOOK
X.

^a Malmsb. p. 63.

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The reigns of Ethelbert and of the Confessor, were distinguished by the turbulence, and even treason of the nobles. Of the nobles, some chose one thing, "over the dukes met in the council, some chose one thing."

Their Official Dignities.

THE EALDORMAN was the highest officer in the kingdom. In rank he was inferior to an etheling; for when an etheling's were-geld was fifteen thousand thrymsas, an ealdorman's was but eight thousand.¹ He was the chief of a shire, and he lost this dignity if he connived at the escape of a robber, unless the king pardoned him.² He was one of the witan, who attended the witenagemot.³ He presided with the bishop at the scire-gemot, which he was ordered to attend,⁴ and the folc-gemot.⁵ He ranked with a bishop,⁶ but was superior to the thegn.⁷ He had great civil powers in administering justice, and also enjoyed high military authority; he is mentioned as leading the shire to battle against the enemy.⁸ To draw weapons before him, incurred a penalty of one hundred shillings;⁹ and to fight before him in a gemot, incurred a fine to him of one hundred and twenty shillings, besides other punishments.¹⁰ The ealdorman is a title which occurs perpetually in the Saxon Chronicle.

The EORL is a dignity recognized in our earliest laws. It appears in those of Ethelbert, who died in 616, where offences in the tune and against the birele of an eorl are expressly punished.¹¹ He is also mentioned in a charter, dated 680.¹² The mund of his widow is highly estimated.¹³ He is also noticed in the laws of Alfred, Edward, Ethelstan, and Edgar.¹⁴

¹ Wilk. Leg. Sax. p. 71.

² Ibid. 20.

³ Ibid. 14.

⁴ Ibid. 78. 136.

⁵ Ibid. 42.

⁶ Ibid. 38.

⁷ Ibid. 22. 71.

⁸ Sax. Chron. p. 78.

⁹ Wilk. Leg. Sax. p. 38.

¹⁰ Ibid. 42.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 3.

¹² Spelman. Concil. p. 164.

¹³ Wilkins, Leg. Sax. p. 7.

¹⁴ Wilk. 35. 53. 70. 82.

An eorl's heriot was four horses saddled and four horses not saddled, four helms, four mails, eight spears and shields, four swords, and two hundred mancusa of gold, which was twice a thegn's heriot.¹⁵ To be an eorl was a dignity to which a thegn might arrive,¹⁶ and even a ceorl.¹⁷

In 656, Wulfer in his charter mentions the eorls: "I Wulfer, kyning, with the king and with eorls, and with herotogas, and with thegnas, the witnesses of this gift."¹⁸ The persons who sign this, with the king and clergy, call themselves ealdormen. The title of eorl occurs again in a grant of 675,¹⁹ and afterwards.²⁰

In the fragment of poetry in the Saxon Chronicle to the year 975, Edward, the son of Edgar, is called the eorla ealder; the ruler of eorls.²¹

In 966, Oslac is stated to have received his ealdordome. In 975, he is called se mære eorl, the great earl; and is stated to have been banished;²² he is also called ealdorman.²³ This same Oslac is mentioned in the laws of Edgar as an earl: "Then let Oslac eorl promote it, and all the army that in this ealdordome remaineth."²⁴ These passages induce a belief that eorl and ealdorman were but different denominations of the same official dignity. Yet, when we find in the Chronicle such distinctions, in the same paragraph, as "Ealfrice ealdorman, and Thorode eorl,"²⁵ we are led to imagine that there must have been some peculiar traits by which they were discriminated. But it is obvious, from the Saxon Chronicle, that eorldome²⁶ expressed the same thing that ealdordome has been applied to signify.

In the latter part of the Anglo-Saxon period, the title ealdorman seems to have been superseded by that of eorl.²⁷ The iarl of the Northmen was the same title.

¹⁵ Wilk. Leg. Sax. 144.

¹⁶ Ibid. 71.

¹⁷ Ibid. 112.

¹⁸ Sax. Chron. p. 37.

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 42.

²⁰ Ibid. 62.

²¹ Sax. Chron. 123.

²² Ibid. 121. 123.

²³ Ibid. 122.

²⁴ Wilk. Leg. Sax. 82.

²⁵ Sax. Chron. 127.

²⁶ Ib. 168, 169. ²⁷ Ibid. 164—173.

The term HERETOCH implies the leader of an army; and HOLD is mentioned as a dignity in Æthelstan's laws, whose was higher than that of a thegn.²⁸ Many persons with this title are mentioned in the Saxon Chronicle,²⁹ in the years 905, 911.

The GEREFAS were officers appointed by the executive power, and in rank inferior to the eorl or ealdorman. They were of various kinds. The heh-gerefa is mentioned, whose were was four thousand thrymsas.³⁰ Also the wic-gerefa, before whom purchases of the Kentishmen in London were to be made, unless they had good witnesses.³¹ And the porte-gerefa, or the gerefa of the gate, who was to witness all purchases without the gate, unless other unimpeachable persons were present.³²

The gerefas were in every byrig.³³ They were judicial officers,³⁴ and were ordered to judge according to right judgment, and the dom-boc, or book of judgment. They delivered over offenders to punishment.³⁵ They were present at the folc-gemot,³⁶ where they were to do justice. They were ordered to convene a gemot every four weeks, to end law-suits.³⁷ They took bail or security in their respective shires for every one to keep the peace; and if they omitted to take the bail, and neglected their duty, they lost their office, and the king's friendship, and forfeited to him one hundred and twenty shillings.³⁸

In cases of robbery, application was to be made to the gerefa in whose district it was; and he was to provide as many men as were sufficient to apprehend the thief, and avenge the injury.³⁹ If any one became "untrue" to every one, the king's gerefa was to go and bring him under bail,

²⁸ Wilk. Leg. Sax. 71.

²⁹ Sax. Chron. 101, 103.

³⁰ Wilk. Leg. 71.

³¹ Ib. 9.

³² Ib. 48.

³³ Ib. 54, 55.

³⁴ Wilk. Leg. 9. 12. 48, 49.

³⁵ Ibid. 12.

³⁶ Ibid. 39. 41.

³⁷ Ibid. 50.

³⁸ Ibid. 69.

³⁹ Ibid. 68.

that he might be brought to justice to answer his accuser. If the offender could find no bail, he was to be killed.⁴⁰ He was to supply such prisoners with food who had no relations that could support them.⁴¹ He was to defend the abbots in their necessities.⁴²

CHAP.

V.

They were made responsible for their official conduct. If they neglected their duty, it was ordered, in the laws of Ethelstan, that they should be fined for their delinquency, and be displaced, and the bishop was to announce it to the gerefa in his province. If they broke the law, they had to pay five pounds the first time, the price of their were the second, and for the third offence they lost all their property.⁴³ If they took a bribe to pervert right, they were punished as severely.⁴⁴

The thegns of the Anglo-Saxons were in rank below the eorls and ealdormen. They formed a species of nobility peculiar to those ancient times; and though, at this distant period, they cannot be delineated accurately, yet, from the circumstances which we can collect, we shall find them a very curious and interesting order of men.

It has been already mentioned, that it was a rank attainable by all, even by the servile, and that the requisites which constituted the dignity are stated in the laws to have been the possession of five hides of his own land, a church, a kitchen, a bell-house, a judicial seat at the burgh gate, and an appropriate office in the king's hall.

But it was essential to a thegn, that he should be a landed proprietor; for though a ceorl had a helm, mail, and a gold-handled sword, yet if he had no land, the laws declare that he must still remain a ceorl.⁴⁵

The thegns were of two descriptions. The inferior sort was called thegn, and the superior were distinguished as king's

⁴⁰ Wilk. Leg. 103.

⁴¹ Ibid. 34.

⁴² Ibid. 115.

⁴³ Wilk. Leg. 61.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 62.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 70.

thegns. The laws recognise these two descriptions. A king's thegn accused of homicide was to acquit himself of guilt by twelve king's thegns; a thegn of lessa maga, with eleven of his equals.⁴⁶ The here-geat, or heriot of the king's thegn that was nearest to him, was two horses saddled, and two not saddled, two swords, four spears, shields, helms, and mails, and fifty mancus of gold. But the here-geat of a common thegn was but one horse, and his trapping and arms.⁴⁷ By comparing these heriots, we may see how greatly superior the rank of the king's thegn was esteemed.

The inferior thegns appear to have been numerous. In every borough, says a law, thirty-three thanes were chosen to witness. In small burghs, and to every hundred, twelve were to be selected.⁴⁸

Thegns are twice mentioned in the laws as thegns born so.⁴⁹ Perhaps the title was attached to their landed property, and descended with it. In the Domesday Survey, many lands are mentioned in several counties, which are called "Terra tainorum;" the land of the thegns.

If a thegn had a church in his boclande, with a place of burial, he was to give to the church one-third of his own tenths; if he had not a burial-place, he was to give what he chose out of the nine parts.⁵⁰

The king's thegn was the thegn of office. No one was to have any socne or jurisdiction over him but the king.⁵¹

The thegn seems to have been a military noble. It is the Saxon word usually applied in those times to denote what the word miles signified.

We have learnt from Domesday-book, that for the tenure of five hides of land the owner was liable to the fyrd, or Saxon militia. We have also found, that the tenure of five hides of land was essential to the dignity of thegn. To be

⁴⁶ Wilk. Leg. 47.

⁴⁷ Ibid. 144.

⁴⁸ Ibid. 80.

⁴⁹ Wilk. Leg. 125. 27.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 130. 144.

⁵¹ Ibid. 118.

king's thegn seems to have been a sort of feudal dignity, for which military service in the fyrd was imposed. The king's thegn is mentioned in the laws as attending in his expeditions, and as having a thegn under him."

The thegn was also a magistrate, and might lose his dignity. The laws declared, that if a judge decided unjustly, he should pay to the king one hundred and twenty shillings, unless he could swear that he knew no better; and he was to lose his thegn-scipe, unless he could afterwards buy it of the king."

They are thus mentioned by Edgar: "In every byrig, and in every scire, I will have my kingly rights, as my father had; and my thegns shall have their thegn-ship in my time, as they had in my father's." ⁵⁴

His were was two thousand thrymsa.⁵⁵ It is elsewhere stated as equal to that of six ceorls, or twelve hundred shillings.⁵⁶ If a thief took refuge with a thegn, he was allowed three days' asylum.⁵⁷

The judicial magistracy of the thegns appears from their assisting at the shire-gemots. The Northmen had also a dignity of this sort, for thegns are mentioned in Snorre.

⁵⁴ Wilk. Leg. 71.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 77. 135.

⁵⁶ Ibid. 80.

⁵⁵ Wilk. Leg. 71.

⁵⁶ Ibid. 64.

⁵⁷ Ibid. 63.

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His were was two thousand thyrings. It is elsewhere stated as equal to that of six counts, or twelve hundred shillings. If a thief took refuge with a thegn, he was allowed

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Wilk. Leg. 71.
Ibid. 77. 135.
Ibid. 80. 135.
Ibid. 83. 135.

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HISTORY OF THE
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ANGLO-SAXONS.

BOOK XI.

The History of the Laws of the Anglo-Saxons.

CHAP. I.

Homicide.

TO trace the principles on which the laws of various nations have been formed, has been at all times an interesting object of intellectual exertion; and as the legislation of the more polished periods of states is much governed by its ancient institutions, it will be important to consider the principles on which our Anglo-Saxon forefathers framed their laws to punish public wrongs, and to redress civil injuries.

It will not be expected that we should give a complete commentary on the Saxon criminal law in that narrow compass within which we are obliged to confine each division of our present volume. But we will endeavour to trace the progress of the Saxon legislation in some of its more prominent features, and in the principal offences. We shall select for this purpose homicide, personal injuries, theft, and adultery.

The principal of pecuniary punishment pervades the laws

CHAP.
I.

of the Anglo-Saxons, and of all the German nations. Whether it arose from the idea, that the punishment of crime should be attended with some benefit to the individual injured, or his family, or his lord; or whether, in their fierce dispositions and warring habits, death was less dreaded as an evil than poverty; or whether the great were the authors of most of the crimes committed, and it was easier to make them responsible in their property than in their lives, we cannot at this distant æra decide: but we will endeavour to select a few of the principles by which the pecuniary compensations and forfeitures appear to have been regulated.

The Saxons made many distinctions in *HOMICIDES*. The life of every man was protected, not by the penalty of his murderer's death, but by the pecuniary exactions which were to follow the homicide. All ranks of men were not, however, esteemed of equal value in the eye of the Saxon law, nor their lives equally worth protecting. The Saxons had therefore established many nice distinctions in this respect. Our present legislation considers the life of one man as sacred as that of another, and will not admit the degree of the crime of murder to depend on the rank or property of the deceased. Hence a peasant is now as secured from wilful homicide as a nobleman. It was otherwise among the Saxons.

The protection which every man received was a curious exhibition of legislative arithmetic. Every man was valued at a certain sum, which was called his *were*; and whoever took his life, was punished by having to pay this *were*.

The *were* was the compensation allotted to the family or relations of the deceased for the loss of his life. But the Saxons had so far advanced in legislation, as to consider homicide as a public as well as private wrong. Hence, besides the redress appointed to the family of the deceased, another pecuniary fine was imposed on the murderer, which was called the *wite*. This was the satisfaction to be rendered to the community for the public wrong which had been committed.

It was paid to the magistrate presiding over it, and varied according to the dignity of the person in whose jurisdiction the offence was committed; twelve shillings was the payment to an eorl, if the homicide occurred in his town, and fifty were forfeited to the king if the district were under the regal jurisdiction.¹

In the first Saxon laws which were committed to writing, or which have descended to us, and which were established in the beginning of the 7th century, murder appears to have been only punishable by the were and the wite, provided the homicide was not in the servile state. If an esne, a slave, killed a man, even "unsinfully," it was not, as with us, esteemed an excusable homicide; it was punished by the forfeiture of all that he was worth.² A person so punished presents us with the original idea of a felon; we consider this word to be a feo-lun, or one divested of all property.

In the laws of Ethelbert the were seems to have been uniform. These laws state a meduman leod-gelde, a general penalty for murder, which appears to have been 100 shillings.³ The differences of the crime arising from the quality of the deceased, or the dignity of the magistrate within whose jurisdiction it occurred, or the circumstances of the action, were marked by differences of the wite rather than of the were. The wite in a king's town was fifty shillings; in an earl's, twelve. If the deceased was a freeman, the wite was fifty shillings to the king as the drichtin, the lord or sovereign of the land. So, if the act was done at an open grave, twenty shillings was the wite; if the deceased was a ceorl, six shillings was the wite. If a læc killed the noblest guest, eighty shillings was the wite; if the next in rank, sixty; if the third, forty shillings.⁴

The wite and the leod-gelde were to be paid by the mur-

¹ Wilkins, p. 2, 3.

² Ibid. 7.

³ Wilkins, p. 2.

⁴ Ibid. 1—7.

derer from his own property, and with good money. But if he fled from justice, his relations were made responsible for it.⁵

The Saxon law-makers so far extended their care as to punish those who contributed to homicide by introducing weapons among those who were quarrelling. Twenty shillings composed the wite.⁶

The usual time for the payment of the wite and were is not stated; but forty days is mentioned in one case as the appointed period.⁷

As the order and civilization of the Anglo-Saxon society increased, an increased value was given to human life, and the penalties of its deprivation were augmented.

The first increase of severity noticed was against the esne, the servile. Their state of subjection rendered them easy instruments of their masters' revenge; and it was therefore found proper to make some part of their punishment extend to their owner. Hence, if any man's esne killed a man of the dignity of an eorl, the owner was to deliver up the esne, and make a pecuniary payment adequate to the value of three men. If the murderer escaped, the price of another man was exacted from the lord, and he was required to shew, by sufficient oaths, that he could not catch him. Three hundred shillings were also imposed as the compensation. If the esne killed a freeman, one hundred shillings were the penalty, the price of one man, and the delivery of the homicide; or if he fled, the value of two men, and purgatory oaths.⁸

A succeeding king exempted the killer of a thief from the payment of his were.⁹ This, however, was a mitigation that was capable of great abuse, and therefore Ina required oath that the thief was killed "sinning," or in the act of stealing, or in the act of flying on account of the theft.¹⁰

Humanity dictated further discrimination. A vagrant in

⁵ Wilkins, p. 3.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Wilkins, p. 7, 8.

⁹ Ibid. 12.

¹⁰ Ibid. 17. 20.

the woods, out of the highway, who did not cry out or sound his horn (probably to give public notice of his situation), might be deemed a thief, and slain;¹¹ and the homicide, by affirming that he slew him for a thief, escaped all penalties. It was, however, wisely added, that if the fact were concealed, and not made known till long time after, the relations of the slave should be permitted to shew that he was guiltless.¹² Mistake or malice was further guarded against by requiring that where a homicide had killed the thief in the act of flying, yet if he concealed the circumstance he should pay the penalties.¹³ The concealing was construed to be presumptive proof of an unjustifiable homicide. Modern law acts on a similar presumption, when it admits the hiding of the body to be an indication of felonious discretion in an infant-murderer, between the age of seven and fourteen.

In the days of Ina, the were, or protecting valuation of an individual's life, was not uniform. The public were arranged into classes, and each class had an appropriated were.

Rank and property seem to have been the criterion of the estimation. The were of some in Ina's time was thirty shillings; of others, 120; of others, 200.¹⁴ The same principle of protection, and of discriminating its pecuniary valuation, was applied to foreigners. The were of a Welshman, who was proprietor of a hide of land, was 120 shillings; if he had but half that quantity, it was 80; and if he had none, it was 60.¹⁵ Hence it appears, that the wealthier a man was, the more precious his life was deemed. This method of regulating the enormity of the crime by the property of the deceased, was highly barbarous. It diminished the safety of the poor, and gave that superior protection to wealth which all ought equally to have shared.

The were, or compensatory payment, seems to have been made to the relations of the defunct. As the exaction of the

¹¹ Wilkins, p. 12.

¹² Ib. 18.

¹³ Ibid. 20.

¹⁴ Wilkins, p. 25.

¹⁵ Ibid. 20.

wite, or fine to the magistrate, kept the crime from appearing merely as a civil injury, this application of the were was highly equitable. But if the deceased was in a servile state, the compensation seems to have become the property of the lord. On the murder of a foreigner, two-thirds of the were went to the king, and one-third only to his son or relations; or, if no relations, the king had one half, and the gild-scipe, or fraternity to which he was associated, received the other.¹⁶

The curious and singular social phenomenon of the gild-scipes, we have already alluded to. The members of these gilds were made to a certain degree responsible for one another's good conduct. They were, in fact, so many bail for each other. Thus, in Alfred's laws, if a man who had no paternal relations killed another, one-third of the were of the slain was to be paid by the maternal kinsman, and one-third by the gild; and if there were no maternal kinsmen, the gild paid a moiety. On the other hand, the gild had also the benefit of receiving one-half the were, if such a man of their society were killed.¹⁷

The principle of making a man's society amenable for his legal conduct was carried so far, that by Ina's law every one who was in the company where a man was killed, was required to justify himself from the act, and all the company were required to pay a fourth part of the were of the deceased.¹⁸

The same principle was established by Alfred in illegal associations. If any man with a predatory band should slay a man of the valuation of twelve hundred shillings, the homicide was ordered to pay both his were and the wite, and every one of the band was fined thirty shillings for being in such an association. If the guilty individual were not avowed, the whole band were ordered to be accused, and to pay equally the were and the wite.¹⁹

¹⁶ Wilkins, p. 18.¹⁷ Ibid. 41.¹⁸ Wilkins, p. 20.¹⁹ Ibid. 40.

The Anglo-Saxons followed the dictates of reason in punishing in homicide those whom we now call accessories before the fact. Thus, if any one lent his weapons to another to kill with them, both were made responsible for the were. If they did not choose to pay it in conjunction, the accessory was charged with one-third of the were and the wite.²⁰ A pecuniary fine was imposed on the master of a mischievous dog.²¹

Excusable homicide was not allowed to be done with impunity. If a man so carried a spear as that it should destroy any individual, he was made amenable for the were, but excused from the wite.²²

Thus stood the laws concerning murder, up to the days of Alfred. The compact between his son Edward and Guthrun made a careful provision for the punctual payment of the were. The homicide was required to produce for this purpose the security of eight paternal and four maternal relations.²³

In the reign of Edmund, an important improvement took place. The legal severity against murder was increased on the head of the offending individual; but his kindred were guarded from the revenge of the family of the deceased. If the full were was not discharged within twelve months, the relations of the criminal were exempted from hostility, but on the condition that they afforded him neither food nor protection. If any supported him, he became what would now be termed an accessory after the fact; he forfeited to the king all his property, and was also exposed to the enmity of the relations of the deceased. The king also forbade any wite on homicide to be remitted.²⁴ And whoever revenged an homicide on any other than the criminal, was declared the enemy of the king and his own friend, and forfeited his possessions. The reason alleged by the sovereign for these and his other provisions was, that he was weary of the unjust and manifold

²⁰ Wilkins, p. 39.

²¹ Ibid. 40.

²² Ibid. 42.

²³ Wilkins, p. 54.

²⁴ Ibid. 73, 74.

fighters which occurred.²⁵ The object was to extinguish that species of revenge which became afterwards known under the name of deadly feud. This was the *fæhthe*, the enmity which the relations of the deceased waged against the kindred of the murderer.

Though the wite was all the penalty that society exacted to itself for murder, and the were all the pecuniary compensation that was permitted to the family, yet we must not suppose that murder was left without any other punishment. There seems reason to believe, that what has been called the deadly feud existed amongst them. The relations of the deceased avenged themselves, if they could, on the murderer or his kinsmen. The law did not allow it. The system of wites and weres tended to discountenance it, by requiring pecuniary sacrifices on all homicides, and of course on those of retaliation as well as others. But as all that the law exacted was the fine and the compensation, individuals were left at liberty to glut their revenge, if they chose to pay for it.

But this spirit of personal revenge was early restricted. Ina's laws imposed a penalty of thirty shillings, besides compensation, if any one took his own revenge before he had demanded legal redress.²⁶ So Alfred's laws enjoined, that if any one knew that his enemy was sitting at home, yet that he should not fight with him until he had demanded redress; but he might shut his adversary up and besiege him for seven days, if he could. If at the expiration of this time the person would surrender himself, he was to have safety for thirty days, and to be given up to his friends and relations. The ealdorman was to help those who had not power enough to form this siege. If the ealdorman refused it, he was to ask aid of the king before he fought. So if any one fell accidentally in with his enemy, yet if the latter was willing to surrender himself, he was to have peace for thirty days. But if he refused

²⁵ Wilkins, p. 73.

²⁶ Ibid. 16.

to deliver up his arms, he might be fought with immediately.²⁷

If any one took up a thief, he not only had a reward, but the relations of the criminal were to swear, that they would not take the fæhthe, or deadly feud, for his apprehension.²⁸ So if any one killed a thief in the act of flying, the relations of the dead man were to swear the unceastes oath; that is, the oath of no enmity, or of not taking the fæhthe.²⁹

Every man was ordered to oppose the warfæhthe, if he was able, or could dare to attempt it.³⁰

Edmund the First interfered to check this system of personal revenge, with marked severity, as before mentioned. He declared that the delinquent should bear his crime on his own head; and that if his kinsmen did not save him by paying the compensation, they should be protected from all fæhthe, provided that they afforded him neither mete nor mund, neither food nor shelter.³¹

²⁷ Wilkins, p. 43, 44.

²⁸ Ibid. 19.

²⁹ Wilkins and Lye call this the unceastes oath, which they interpret unmeaningly *the oath not select*. The reading of the Roff. MS. is unceastes, which is intelligible, and

is obviously an expression synonymous with the unfæhtha oath mentioned in the preceding page. Both passages clearly mean, that the taker and killer of the thief were to be absolved from the fæhthe of his relations.

³⁰ Ibid. 22.

³¹ Ibid. 73.

CHAP. II.

*Personal Injuries.*BOOK
XI.

THE compensation allotted to PERSONAL INJURIES, arising from what modern lawyers would call assault and battery, was curiously arranged. Homer is celebrated for discriminating the wounds of his heroes with anatomical precision. The Saxon legislators were not less anxious to distinguish between the different wounds to which the body is liable, and which, from their laws, we may infer that they frequently suffered. In their most ancient laws these were the punishments:

The loss of an eye or of a leg appears to have been considered as the most aggravated injury which could arise from an assault; and was therefore punished by the highest fine, or 50 shillings.

To be made lame was the next most considerable offence, and the compensation for it was 30 shillings.

For a wound that caused deafness, 25 shillings.

To lame the shoulder, divide the chine-bone, cut off the thumb, pierce the diaphragm, or to tear off the hair and fracture the skull, was each punished by a fine of 20 shillings.

For breaking the thigh, cutting off the ears, wounding the eye or mouth, wounding the diaphragm, or injuring the teeth so as to affect the speech, was exacted 12 shillings.

For cutting off the little finger, 11 shillings.

For cutting off the great toe, or for tearing off the hair entirely, 10 shillings.

For piercing the nose, 9 shillings.

For cutting off the fore finger, 8 shillings.

For cutting off the gold finger, for every wound in the thigh, for wounding the ear, for piercing both cheeks, for cutting

either nostril, for each of the front teeth, for breaking the jaw-bone, for breaking an arm, 6 shillings.

For seizing the hair so as to hurt the bone, for the loss of either of the eye-teeth, or of the middle finger, 4 shillings.

For pulling the hair so that the bone became visible; for piercing the ear, or one cheek; for cutting off the thumb-nail, for the first double tooth, for wounding the nose with the fist, for wounding the elbow, for breaking a rib, or for wounding the vertebræ, 3 shillings.

For every nail (probably of the fingers), and for every tooth beyond the first double tooth, 1 shilling.

For seizing the hair, 50 scættas.

For the nail of the great toe, 30 scættas.

For every other nail, 10 scættas.

To judge of this scale of compensations by modern experience, there seems to be a gross disproportion, not only between the injury and the compensation, in many instances, but also between the different classes of compensation. Six shillings is a very inconsiderable recompense for the pain and confinement that follows an arm or the jaw-bone broke; and it seems absurd to rank in punishment with these serious injuries the loss of a front tooth. To value the thumb at a higher price than the fingers, is reasonable; but to estimate the little finger at 11 shillings, the great toe at 10 shillings, the fore finger at 8 shillings, the ring-finger at 6 shillings, and the middle finger at 4 shillings, seems a very capricious distribution of recompense. So the teeth seem to have been valued on no principle intelligible to us: a front tooth was atoned for by 6 shillings, an eye-tooth by 4 shillings, the first double tooth 3 shillings, either of the others 1 shilling. Why to lame the shoulder should occasion a fine of 20 shillings, and to break the thigh but 12, and the arm but 6, cannot be explained, unless we presume that the surgical skill of the day found the

cure of the arm easier than of the thigh, and that easier than the shoulder.¹

Alfred made some difference in these compensations, which may be seen in his laws.²

He also appointed penalties for other personal wrongs.

If any one bound a ceorl unsinring, he was to pay ten shillings, twenty if he whipped him, and thirty if he brought him to the pillory. If he shaved him in such a manner as to expose him to derision, he forfeited ten shillings, and thirty shillings if he shaved him like a priest, without binding him; but if he bound him and then gave him the clerical tonsure, the penalty was doubled. Twenty shillings was also the fine if any man cut another's beard off.³ These laws prove the value that was attached to the hair and the beard in the Anglo-Saxon society.

Alfred also enjoined, that if any man carrying a spear on his shoulder pierced another, or wounded his eyes, he paid his were, but not a wite. If it was done wilfully, the wite was exacted, if he had carried the point three fingers higher than the shaft. If the weapon was carried horizontally, he was excused the wite.⁴

¹ Wilkins, 4—6.

² Ibid. 44—46.

³ Ibid. 42.

⁴ Ibid.

CHAP. III.

Theft.

THEFT appears to have been considered as the most enormous crime, and was, as such, severely punished. If we consider felony to be a forfeiture of goods and chattels, theft was made felony by the Anglo-Saxons in their earliest law; for if a freeman stole from a freeman, the compensation was to be threefold; the king had the wite and all his goods.¹

CHAP.
III.

The punishment was made heavier in proportion to the social rank of the offender. Thus, while a freeman's theft was to be atoned for by a triple compensation, the servile were only subjected to a twofold retribution.²

The punishment of theft was soon extended farther. By the laws of Wihtræd, if a freeman was taken with the theft in his hand, the king had the option of killing him, of selling him, or receiving his were.³

Ina aggravated the punishment yet more. If the wife and family of a thief witnessed his offence, they were all made to go into slavery.⁴ The thief himself was to lose his life, unless he could redeem it by paying his were.⁵ Ina's law defines these kinds of offenders. They were called thieves, if no more than seven were in a body; but a collection of above seven, up to thirty-five, was a hloth; a greater number was considered as an here, or an army:⁶ distinct punishments were allotted to these sorts of offenders.

The Saxon legislators were never weary of accumulating severities against thieves; the amputation of the hand and foot was soon added.⁷ If a man's geneat stole, the master

¹ Wilk. p. 2.

² Ibid. 12.

³ Ibid. 7.

⁴ Ibid. 16.

⁵ Wilk. p. 17.

⁷ Ibid. 18. 20.

⁶ Ibid.

BOOK
XI.

himself was subjected to a certain degree of compensation.⁶ A reward of ten shillings was allowed for his apprehension;⁷ and if a thief taken was suffered to escape, the punishment for the neglect was severe.¹⁰

In the reign of Ethelstan, a milder spirit introduced a principle, which has continued to prevail in our criminal jurisprudence ever since, and still exists in it. This was, that no one should lose his life for stealing less than twelve pence. The Saxon legislators added, indeed, a proviso, which we have dropped: "unless he flies or defends himself."¹¹

They introduced another mitigating principle, which we still attend to in practice, though not in theory; this was, that no youth under fifteen should be executed. The same exception of his flight or resistance was here also added;¹² his punishment was to be imprisonment, and bail was to be given for his good behaviour. If his relations would not give the bail, he was to go into slavery. If he afterwards stole, he might be hanged.¹³

The many provisions made for the public purchases of goods before witnesses, or magistrates, seem to have arisen partly from the frequency of thefts in those days, and partly from the severity with which they were punished. To escape this, it was necessary that every man, and especially a dealer in goods, should be always able to prove his legal property in what he possessed. Hence, in Athelstan's laws, it is enacted, that no purchases above twenty pennies should be made outside the gate; but that such bargains should take place within the town, under the witness of the port gerefæ, or some unlying man, or of the gerefæ in the folc-gemot.¹⁴

⁶ Wilk. p. 18. 20.

⁷ Ibid. 19.

¹⁰ Ibid. 20.

¹¹ Wilkins, p. 70.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid. 58.

CHAP. IV.

Adultery.

THE criminal intercourse between the sexes is not punished among us as a public wrong committed against the general peace and order of society. No personal punishments, and no criminal prosecutions can be directed against it, although the most trifling assault and the most inconsiderable misdemeanor are liable to such consequences. It is considered by us, if unaccompanied by force, merely as a matter of civil injury, for which the individual must bring an action and get what damages he can; and even this right of action is limited to husbands and fathers, and the latter sues under the guise of a fiction, pretending to have sustained an injury by having lost the service of his daughter.

Our Saxon legislators did not leave the punishment of this intercourse to the will and judgment of individuals. But they enacted penalties against it as a public wrong, always punishable when it occurred. In the amount of the penalty, however, they followed one of the great principles of their criminal legislation, and varied it according to the rank of the female. The offence with a king's maiden incurred a payment as high as to kill a freeman, which was fifty shillings; with his grinding servant half that sum, and with his third sort twelve shillings.

With an earl's cupbearer the penalty was twelve shillings, which was the same that attached if a man killed another in an earl's town. With a ceorl's cupbearer six shillings was the fine, fifty scættas for his other servant, and thirty for his servant of the third kind.*

* Wilk. p. 2.

* Ib. p. 3.

CHAP.
IV.

Even the poor servile esne was protected in his domestic happiness. To invade his connubial rights incurred the penalty of a double compensation.³

Forcible violation was chastised more severely. If the sufferer was a widow, the offender paid twice the value of her mundbyrd. If she were a maiden, fifty shillings were to be paid to her owner, whether father or master, and the invader of her chastity was also to buy her for his wife at the will of her owner. If she was betrothed to another in money, he was to pay twenty shillings; and if she was pregnant, in addition to a penalty of thirty-five shillings, a further fine of fifteen shillings was to be paid to the king.⁴

The next laws subjected adulterers to ecclesiastical censure and excommunication, and enjoined the banishment of foreigners who would not abandon such connections.⁵ The pecuniary penalties were also augmented.

The laws remained in this state till the time of Alfred, when some new modifications of connection were introduced. He governed the punishment of adultery by the rank of the husband. If he was a twelfhynd-man the offender paid one hundred and twenty shillings. If a syxhynd-man, one hundred shillings. If a ceorl, forty shillings. This was to be paid in live property; but no man was to be personally sold for it.⁶

But the most curious part of Alfred's regulations on this subject was the refinement with which he distinguished the different steps of the progress towards the completion of the crime. To handle the neck of a ceorl's wife incurred a fine of five shillings. To throw her down, without further consequences, occasioned a penalty of ten shillings; and for a subsequent commission of the crime, sixty shillings.⁷

But as we now allow the previous misconduct of the

³ Wilk. p. 7.

⁴ lb. p. 7.

⁵ Wilk. p. 10.

⁶ lb. p. 37. ⁷ lb.

wife to mitigate the amount of the damages paid by the adulterer; so Alfred and his witan provided, that if the wife had transgressed before, the fines of her paramour were to be reduced an half.⁸

For the rape of a ceorl's slave, five shillings were to be paid the owner, and sixty shillings for the wite. But the violence of a theow on a fellow slave was punished by a personal mutilation.⁹

⁸ Willk. p. 37. ⁹ Ib. 40.

CHAP. V.

*The Were and the Mund.*BOOK
XI.

AS the WERE and the MUND are expressions which occur frequently in the Saxon laws, it may be useful to explain what they mean.

Every man had the protection of a were and the privilege of a mund. The were was the legal valuation of an individual, varying according to his situation in life.

If he was killed, it was the sum his murderer had to pay for the crime—if he committed crimes himself, it was the penalty which, in many cases, he had to discharge.

The were was therefore the penalty by which his safety was guarded, and his crimes prevented or punished. If he violated certain laws, it was his legal mulct; if he were himself attacked, it was the penalty inflicted on others. Hence it became the measure and mark of a man's personal rank and consequence, because its amount was exactly regulated by his condition in life.

The king's were geld or were payment was thirty thousand thrymsas, or one hundred and twenty pounds; an etheling's was fifteen thousand; a bishop and ealderman's, eight thousand; a holde's and heh-gerefa's, four thousand; a thegn, two thousand, or twelve hundred shillings; a ceorl's, two hundred and sixty-six thrymsas, or two hundred shillings, unless he had five hides of land at the king's expeditions, and then his were became that of a thegn. The were of a twelfhynd-man was one hundred and twenty shillings, of a syxhynd-man was eighty shillings, and of a twyhynd-man thirty shillings.*

A Welshman's were who had some land, and paid gafol to the king, was two hundred and twenty shillings; if he had

* Wilkins, p. 71, 72. 25.

only half a hide of land, it was eighty shillings; and if he had no land, but was free, it was seventy shillings.²

CHAP.
V.

The amount of a person's were determined even the degree of his legal credibility. The oath of a twelfhynd-man was equal to the oaths of six ceorls; and if revenge was taken for the murder of a twelfhynd-man, it might be wrecked on six ceorls.³

To be deprived of this were was the punishment of some crimes, and then the individual lost his greatest social protection.

The MUNDBYRD was a right of protection or patronage which individuals possessed for their own benefit and that of others. The violation of it towards themselves, or those whom it sheltered, was punished with a severity, varying according to the rank of the patron. The king's mundbyrd was guarded by a penalty of fifty shillings. That of a widow of an earl's condition was equally protected, while the mund of the widow of the second sort was valued at twenty shillings, of the third sort at twelve shillings, and of the fourth sort at six shillings. If a widow was taken away against her consent, the compensation was to be twice her mund. The penalty of violating a ceorl's mund was six shillings.⁴ This privilege of the mund seems to be the principle of the doctrine, that every man's house is his castle.

The mund was the guardian of a man's household peace, as the were was, of his personal safety. If any one drew a weapon where men were drinking, and the floor was stained with blood, besides forfeiting to the king fifty shillings, he had to pay a compensation to the master of the house for the violation of his mundbyrd.⁵

² Wilkins, p. 71, 72. 25.

³ Ib.

⁴ Ib. p. 2. 7.

⁵ Ib. 9.

C H A P. VI.

*Their Borh, or Sureties.*BOOK
XI.

THE system of giving sureties, or bail, to answer an accusation, seems to have been coeval with the Saxon nation, and has continued to our times. In one of our earliest laws it was provided, that the accused should be bound over by his sureties to answer the crime of which he was accused, and to do what the judges should appoint.

If he neglected to find bail, he was to forfeit twelve shillings.¹ These bail were not to be taken indiscriminately; for the laws of Ina enact, that the bail might be refused if the magistrate knew that he acted right in the refusal.²

Felonies are notailable now; in the Anglo-Saxon times it was otherwise.

If a man was accused of theft, he was to find borh, or sureties; if he could not do this, his goods were taken as security. If he had none, he was imprisoned till judgment.³

When a homicide pledged himself to the payment of the were, he was to find borh for it. The borh was to consist of twelve sureties; eight from the paternal line, and four from the maternal.⁴

If a man was accused of witchcraft, he was to find borh to abstain from it.⁵

If a man was found guilty of theft by the ordeal, he was to be killed, unless his relations would save him by paying his were and ceap-gyld, and give borh for his good behaviour afterwards.⁶

But the most curious part of the Saxon borh was not the

¹ Wilk. p. 8.² Ibid. 21.³ Ibid. 50.⁴ Wilk. 54.⁵ Ibid. 57.⁶ Ibid. 65.

sureties which they who were accused or condemned were to find to appear to the charge or to perform the judgment pronounced; but it was the system, that every individual should be under bail for his good behaviour.

It has been mentioned that Alfred is stated to have divided England into counties, hundreds, and tithings—that every person was directed to belong to some tithing or hundred, and that every hundred and tenth were pledged to the preservation of the public peace, and answerable for the conduct of their inhabitants.⁷

Of this statement, it may be only doubted whether he divided England into counties or shires. These divisions certainly existed before Alfred. The shire is mentioned in the laws of Ina;⁸ and we know that the counties of Kent, Essex, Sussex, existed as little kingdoms from the first invasion of the Saxons. Of the other counties, we also find many expressly mentioned in the Saxon history anterior to Alfred's reign.

It may however be true, that he may have separated and named some particular shires, and this partial operation may have occasioned the whole of the general fact to be applied to him.

The system of placing all the people under borh originated from Alfred, according to the historians; but we first meet with it clearly expressed in the laws in the time of Edgar. By his laws it is thus directed: "Every man shall find and have borh, and the borh shall produce him to every legal charge, and shall keep him; and if he have done any wrong and escapes, his borh shall bear what he ought to have borne. But if it be theft, and the borh can bring him forward within twelve months, then what the borh paid shall be returned to him."⁹

This important and burthensome institution is thus again repeated by the same prince: "This is then what I will;

⁷ See vol. i. of this work, p. 327.

⁸ Wilk. p. 20. 16.

⁹ Ibid. 78.

BOOK
XI.

“ that every man be under borh, both in burghs and out of
 “ them ; and where this has not been done, let it be settled
 “ in every borough and in every hundred.”¹⁰

It is thus again repeated in the laws of Ethelred : “ Every
 “ freeman shall have true borh, that the borh may hold him
 “ to every right, if he should be accused.”¹¹ The same laws
 direct, that if the accused should fly, and decline the ordeal,
 the borh was to pay to the accuser the ceap-gyld, and to the
 lord his were.” And as to that part of the population which
 was in the servile state, their lords were to be the sureties for
 their conduct.¹³

The man who was accused and had no borh, might be
 killed, and buried with the infamous.¹⁴

Nothing seems more repugnant to the decorous feelings of
 manly independence, than this slavish bondage and antici-
 pated criminality. It degraded every man to the character
 of an intended culprit : as one whose propensities to crime
 were so flagrant, that he could not be trusted for his good
 conduct, to his religion, his reason, his habits, or his honour.
 Every one was presumed to be so full of innate vice, that
 nothing could save society from universal iniquity, but that
 every one should find legal sureties that he would not commit
 it. Such a law was a libel on human nature, and must have
 created more depravity than it prevented. This indeed seems
 to have been experienced ; for no period more abounded with
 political or social vices and calamities than the reigns which
 followed the establishment of this law, if we date it from
 Edgar.

¹⁰ Wilk. 80.¹¹ Ib. 102.¹² Ibid.¹³ Ibid.¹⁴ Ib. 103.

C H A P. VII.

Their Legal Tribunals.

THE supreme legal tribunal was the witena-gemot, which, like our present house of lords, was paramount to every other.

C H A P.
VII.

The scire-gemots may be next mentioned. One of these has been mentioned in the chapter on the disputes concerning land: another may be described from the Saxon apograph which Hickes has printed.

This was a shire-gemot at Aylston, in Canute's days. It was composed of a bishop, an ealdorman, the son of an ealdorman; of two persons who came with the king's message, or writ; the sheriff, or scir-gerefa; three other men, and all the thegns in Herefordshire.

To this gemot Edwin came, and spake against his mother, concerning some lands. The bishop asked who would answer for her. Thurcil the White said, he would if he knew the complaint, but that he was ignorant about it. Three thegns of the gemot were shewn where she lived, and rode to her, and asked her what dispute she had about the land for which her son was impleading her. She said she had no land which belonged to him, and was angry, earl-like, against her son. She called Leofleda, her relation, the wife of Thurcil the White, and before them thus addressed her: "Here sits
" Leofleda, my kinswoman; I give thee both my lands, my
" gold, and my clothes, and all that I have, after my life."
She then said to the thegns, "Do thegn-like, and relate well
" what I have said to the gemot, before all the good men,
" and tell them to whom I have given my lands and my
" property; but to my own son nothing; and pray them to
" be witness of this."—And they did so, and rode to the gemot, and told all the good men there what she had said to

them. Then stood up Thurcil the White in that gemot, and prayed all the thegns to give his wife the lands which her relation had given to her; and they did so; and Thurcil the White rode to St. Ethelbert's minister, by all the folks leave and witness, and left it to be set down in one Christ's book.¹

By the laws of Canute it was ordered, that there should be two shire-gemots and three burgh-gemots every year, and the bishop and the ealdorman should attend then.² By the laws of Æthelstan, punishments were ordered to those who refused to attend gemots.³ Every man was to have peace in going to the gemot and returning from it, unless he were a thief.⁴

Sometimes a gemot was convened from eight hundreds, and sometimes from three.⁵ On one occasion, the ealdorman of Ely held a plea with a whole hundred below the cemetery at the north gate of the monastery; at another time, a gemot of two hundreds was held at the north door of the monastery.⁶

A shire-gemot is mentioned at which the ealdorman and the king's gerefafa presided. "The cause having been opened, and the reasons of both sides heard, by the advice of the magnates there, thirty-six barons, chosen in equal number from the friends on both sides, were appointed judges." These went out to examine the affair, and the monks were asked why and from whose donation they possessed that land. They stated their title, and length of possession. They were asked if they would dare to affirm this statement on the sacrament, that the controversy might be terminated. The monks were going to do this, but the ealdorman would not suffer them to swear before a secular power. He therefore declared himself to be their protector, the witness of their devotion and credibility, alleging that the exhibition of the cautionary oath belonged to him. All who were present admired the speech of the ealdorman, and determined that

¹ Hickes, Dissert. Epist. p. 2.

² Wilkins, p. 136.

³ Ibid. p. 60.

⁴ Wilkins, p. 136.

⁵ 3 Gale, 469. 473.

⁶ Ibid. 473. 475.

the oath was unnecessary; and for the false suit and unjust vexation of the relations who had claimed the lands from the monastery, they adjudged all the landed property and goods of the other to be at the king's mercy. The king's gerefa, and the other great men, then interfered; and the complainant, perceiving the peril of his situation, publicly abjured the land in question, and pledged his faith never to disturb the monastery in its possession: a reconciliation then took place.⁷ The administration of justice in this affair seems to have been very summary and arbitrary, and not very compatible with our notions of legal evidence.

We have one account of a criminal prosecution. A wife having poisoned a child, the bishop cited her and her husband to the gemot; he did not appear, though three times summoned. The king in anger sent his writ, and ordered him, that, "admitting no causes of delay," he should hasten to the court. He came, and before the king and the bishop affirmed his innocence. It was decreed that he should return home, and that on the summons of the bishop he should attend on a stated day at a stated place, with eleven jurors, and that his wife should bring as many of her sex, and clear their fame and the conscience of others by oath. On the appointed day, and in the meadow where the child was buried, the cause was agitated. The relics, which an abbot brought, were placed upon a hillock, before which the husband, extending his right arm, swore that he had never consented to his son's death, nor knew his murderer, nor how he had been killed. The wife denying the fact, the hillock was opened by the bishop's command, and the bones of the child appeared. The wife at last fell at the prelate's feet, confessed the crime, and implored mercy. The conclusion of the whole was, that the accused gave a handsome present of land to the ecclesiastics concerned, as a conciliatory atonement.⁸

⁷ 3 Gale, 416.

⁸ 3 Gale, 440.

A bishop having made a contract for land with a drunken Dane, the seller, when sober, refused to fulfil it. The cause was argued in the king's forum; the fact of the bargain was proved; and the king adjudged the land to the bishop, and the money to the Dane.⁹ The forum regis is mentioned again.¹⁰

The folc-gemot occurs in the laws. "It is established for
" ceap-men, or merchants, that they bring the men that they
" lead with them before the king's gerefafa in the folc-gemot,
" and say how many of them there be, and that they take
" these men up with them, that they may bring them again
" to the folc-gemot, if sued. And when they shall want to
" have more men with them in their journey, they shall
" announce it as often as it occurs to the king's gerefafa, in the
" witness of the folc-gemot."¹¹

These folc-gemots were ordered not to be held on a Sunday; and if any one disturbed them by a drawn weapon, he had to pay a wite of one hundred and twenty shillings to the ealdorman.¹²

The following may be considered as proceedings before a folc-gemot. Begmund having unjustly seized some lands of a monastery, when the ealdorman came to Ely, the offenders were summoned to the placitum, of the citizens and of the hundred, several times, but they never appeared. The abbot did not desist, but renewed his pleading, both within and without the city, and often made his complaint to the people. At length the ealdorman, coming to Cambridge, held a great placitum of the citizens and hundreds, before twenty-four judges. There the abbot narrated before all, how Begmund had seized his lands, and though summoned had not appeared. They adjudged the land to the abbot, and decreed Begmund to pay the produce of his fishery to the abbot for six years, and to give the king the were; and, if he neglected to pay, they authorized a seizure of his goods.¹³

⁹ 3 Gale, 442. ¹⁰ Ib. 444.
¹¹ Wilk. Leg. Sax. p. 41.

¹² Wilk. 42.
¹³ Hist. El. 3 Gale, 478.

Much of their judicial proceedings rested on oaths, and therefore their punishment of perjury was severe. A perjured man is usually classed with witches, murderers, and the most obnoxious beings in society; he was declared unworthy of the ordeal; he was disabled from being a witness again, and if he died he was denied Christian burial.¹⁴

We have some specimens of the oaths they took:

The oath of a plaintiff in the case of theft was, "In the Lord: As I urge this accusation with full folc-right, and without fiction, deceit, or any fraud; so from me was that thing stolen of which I complain, and which I found again with N."

Another oath of a plaintiff was, "In the Lord: I accuse not N. neither for hate nor art, nor unjust avarice, nor do I know any thing more true, but so my mind said to me, and I myself tell for truth, that he was the thief of my goods."

A defendant's oath was, "In the Lord: I am innocent both in word and deed of that charge of which N. accused me."

A witness's oath was, "In the name of the Almighty God: As I here stand in true witness, unbidden and unbought; so I oversaw it with mine eyes and overheard it with mine ears, what I have said."

The oath of those who swore for others was, "In the Lord: the oath is clean and upright that N. swore."¹⁵

¹⁴ Wilk. Leg. Sax. 53. 61. 49.

¹⁵ Ibid. 63, 64.

C H A P. VIII.

*Their Ordeals and legal Punishments.*BOOK
XI.

WE have a full account of the Anglo-Saxon ordeals, of hot water and hot iron, in the laws of Ina.

The iron was to be three pounds in weight for the threefold trial, and therefore probably one pound only for the more, simple charge; and the accused was to have the option, whether he would prefer the water "ordal" or the iron "ordal."

No man was to go within the church after the fire was lighted by which the ordeal was to be heated, except the priest and the accused. The distance of nine feet was to be then measured out, from the stake, of the length of the foot of the accused. If the trial was to be by hot water, the water was heated till it boiled furiously; and the vessel that contained it was to be iron or copper, lead or clay.

If the charge was of the kind they called anfeald, or simple, the accused was to immerge his hand as far as the wrist in the water, to take out the stone; if the charge was of threefold magnitude, he was to plunge his arm up to the elbow.

When the ordeal was ready, two men were to enter of each side, and to agree that the water was boiling furiously. Then an equal number of men were to enter from each side, and to stand along the church on both sides of the ordeal, all fasting. After this the priest was to sprinkle them with holy water, of which each was to taste; they were to kiss the gospels, and to be signed with the cross. All this time the fire was not to be mended any more; but the iron, if the ordeal was to be by hot iron, was to lay on the coals till the last collect was finished; and it was then to be placed on the staples which were to sustain it.

While the accused was snatching the stone out of the water, or carrying the hot iron for the space of nine feet, nothing was to be said but a prayer to the Deity to discover the truth. The hand was to be then bound up and sealed, and to be kept so for three days; after that time the seal and the bandage were removed, and the hand was to be examined, to see whether it was foul or clear.¹

From this plain account, the ordeal was not so terrible as it may at first sight appear; because, independently of the opportunity which the accused had, by going alone into the church, of making terms with the priest, and of the ease with which his dexterity could have substituted cold iron or stone for the heated substances, at the moment of the trial, and the impossibility of the detection, amid the previous forms of the holy water, the diminution of the fire, prayers on the occasion, and the distance of the few spectators; independently of these circumstances, the actual endurance of the ordeal admitted many chances of acquittal. It was not exacted that the hand should not be burnt, but that after the space of three days it should not exhibit that appearance which would be called foul, or guilty. As the iron was to be carried only for the space of nine of the feet of the accused, it would be hardly two seconds in his hand. The hand was not to be immediately inspected, but it was carefully kept from air, which would irritate the wound, and was left to the chances of a good constitution to be so far healed in three days as to discover those appearances, when inspected, which were allowed to be satisfactory. Besides, there was, no doubt, much preparatory training, suggested by the more experienced, which would indurate the epidermis so much as to make it less sensible to the action of the hot substances which it was to hold.²

Ordeals were forbidden on festivals and fast-days.³

¹ Wilk. Leg. Inæ. p. 27.

² Some authors have mentioned the pre-

parations that were used to indurate the skin.

³ Wilk. p. 53.

Of the single ordeal, it was ordered, that if the persons had been accused of theft, and were found guilty by it, and did not know who would be their borh, they should be put into prison, and be treated as the laws had enjoined.⁴

An accused mint-master was to undergo the ordeal of the hot iron.⁵

The ordeal might be compounded for.⁶

The law of Æthelstan added some directions as to the ordeal. Whoever appealed to it was to go three nights before to the priest who was to transact it, and should feed on bread and salt, water and herbs. He was to be present at the masses in the mean time, and make his *offerings* and receive the holy sacrament on the day of his going through the ordeal; and he should swear, that with folc-right he was guiltless of the accusation before he went to the ordeal. If the trial was the hot water, he was to plunge his arm half way above the elbow on the rope. If the ordeal was the iron, three days were to pass before it was examined. They who attended were to have fasted, and not to exceed twelve in number of either side; or the ordeal was to be void unless they departed.⁷

A thief found guilty by the ordeal was to be killed, unless his relations redeemed him by paying his were, and the value of the goods, and giving borh for his good behaviour.⁸

The command of the ordeals must have thrown great power into the hands of the church; and as in most cases they who appealed to them did so from choice, it is probable, that whoever expressed this deference to the ecclesiastical order were rewarded for the compliment, as far as discretion and contrivance would permit.

The ordeal was a trial, not a punishment. The most popular of the legal punishments were the pecuniary mulcts.

⁴ Wilk. p. 57.

⁵ Ib. 59.

⁶ Ib. 60.

⁷ Wilk. p. 61.

⁸ Ib. 65. For the ordeal of other nations, see Muratori, v.; and Du Cange.

But as the imperfection and inutility of these could not be always disguised—as they were sometimes impunity to the rich, who could afford them, and to the poor, who had nothing to pay them with, other punishments were enacted. Among these we find imprisonment,⁹ outlawry,¹⁰ banishment,¹¹ slavery,¹² and transportation.¹³ In other cases we have whipping,¹⁴ branding,¹⁵ the pillory,¹⁶ amputation of limb,¹⁷ mutilation of the nose and ears and lips,¹⁸ the eyes plucked out, hair torn off,¹⁹ stoning,²⁰ and hanging.²¹ Nations not civilized have barbarous punishments.

⁹ Wilkins, Leg. Sax. 34. 70.

¹⁰ Ib. 74. Sax. Chron.

¹¹ Sax. Chron.

¹² Wilk. 12. 15. 18. 20. 50.

¹³ Ib. 12.

¹⁴ Ib. 12. 22. 52, 53. 81.

¹⁵ Ib. 139.

¹⁶ Wilk. 11. 75. 54.

¹⁷ Ib. 18. 139. 134.

¹⁸ Ib. 138. 142.

¹⁹ Ib. 138.

²⁰ Ib. 67.

²¹ Ib. 18. 70. 139.

C H A P. IX.

*The Trial by Jury.*BOOK
XI.

IN considering the origin of the happy and wise institution of the ENGLISH JURY, which has contributed so much to the excellence of our national character, and to the support of our constitutional liberty, it is impossible not to feel considerable diffidence and difficulty. It is painful to decide upon a subject on which great men have previously differed. It is peculiarly desirable to trace, if possible, the seed bud, and progressive vegetation of a tree so beautiful and so venerable.

It is not contested that the institution of a jury existed in the time of the Conqueror. The document which remains of the dispute between Gundulf, the bishop of Rochester, and Pichot, the sheriff, ascertains this fact. We will state the leading circumstances of this valuable account.

The question was, Whether some land belonged to the church or to the king? “The king commanded that all the men of the county should be gathered together, that by their judgment it might be more justly ascertained to whom the land belonged.” This was obviously a shire-gemot.

“They being assembled, from fear of the sheriff, affirmed that the land was the king’s: but as the bishop of Bayeux, who presided at that placitum, did not believe them, he ordered, that if they knew that what they said was true, they should chuse twelve from among themselves, who should confirm with an oath what all had declared. But these, when they had withdrawn to counsel, and were there harassed by the sheriff through his messenger, returned and swore to the truth of what they asserted.”

By this decision the land became the king’s. But a monk,

who knew how the fact really stood, assured the bishop of Rochester of the falsehood of their oath, who communicated the information to the bishop of Bayeux. The bishop, after hearing the monk, sent for one of the twelve, who, falling at his feet, confessed that he had forsworn himself. The man on whose oath they had sworn theirs, made a similar avowal.

On this the bishop "ordered the sheriff to send the rest " to London, and twelve other men from the best in the " county, who confirmed that to be true which they had " sworn."

They were all adjudged to be perjured, because the man whose evidence they had accredited had avowed his perjury. The church recovered the land; and when "the last twelve " wished to affirm that they had not consented with those " who had sworn, the bishop said they must prove this by " the iron ordeal. And because they undertook this, and " could not do it, they were fined three hundred pounds " to the king, by the judgment of other men of the " county."

By this narration, we find that a shire-gemot determined on the dispute, in the first instance; but that in consequence of the doubts of the presiding judge, they chose from among themselves twelve who swore to the truth of what they had decided, and whose determination decided the case.

The jury appears to me to be an institution of progressive growth, and its principle may be traced to the earliest Anglo-Saxon times. One of the judicial customs of the Saxons was, that a man might be cleared of the accusation of certain crimes, if an appointed number of persons came forward and swore that they believed him innocent of the allegation. These men were literally juratores, who swore to a verdictum; who so far determined the facts of the case as to

¹ Thorpe Regist. Roffen, 32.

acquit the person in whose favour they swore. Such an oath, and such an acquittal, is a jury in its earliest and rudest shape; and it is remarkable, that for accusations of any consequence among the Saxons of the continent, twelve juratores were the number required for an acquittal. Thus, for the wound of a noble, which produced blood, or disclosed the bone, or broke a limb; or if one seized another by the hair, or threw him into the water; in these and some other cases twelve juratores were required.² Similar customs may be observed in the laws of the continental Angli and Frisiones, though sometimes the number of the jury or juratores varied according to the charge; every number being appointed, from three to forty-eight.³ In the laws of the Ripuarii, we find that in certain cases the oaths of even seventy-two persons were necessary to his acquittal.⁴ It is obvious, from their numbers, that these could not have been witnesses to the facts alleged. Nor can we suppose that they came forward with the intention of wilful and suborned perjury. They could only be persons who, after hearing and weighing the facts of the case, proffered their deliberate oaths that the accused was innocent of the charge. And this was performing one of the most important functions of our modern juries.

In the laws of the Alemanni, the principle appears more explicitly; for in these the persons who are to take the oath of acquittal are called *nominati*, or persons named. And in the case of murdering the messenger of a dux, the juratores were to be twelve named and twelve elected.⁵ This named and elected jury seems to approximate very closely to our present institution.

In referring to our own Anglo-Saxon laws, we find three jurators mentioned in those of the kings of Kent, in the latter end of the seventh century. If a freeman were accused of theft, he was to make compensation, or to acquit himself by

² Lindenberg. Lex Sax. p. 474.

³ Lind. Lex Angli. 482. and Lex Fris. 490.

⁴ Lind. Lex Ripuar. p. 451.

⁵ Lind. Lex Aleman. p. 370, 371.

the oaths of four *pim æpba* men. These words are literally "the number of four legal men," or "four of the numbered legal men."⁶ In either construction they point to a meaning similar to the *nominati* in the laws of the Alemanni; that is, persons legally appointed as jurators.

The principle of an acquittal by the peers of the party accused appears in the laws of *Wihtræd*, where the clergyman is to be acquitted by four of his equals, and the *ceorlisc* man by four of his own rank.⁷

An acquittal from *walreaf*, or the plunder of the dead, required the oaths of forty-eight full-born thegns.⁸ These, of course, could not be witnesses. They must have been a selection of so many in the shire-gemot, who, on hearing the facts of the accusation, would, upon their oaths, absolve the accused. And what is this but a jury?

In the treaty between Alfred and Guthrun, more lights appear: "If any accuse the king's thegn of manslaughter (*manslihtes*), if he dare absolve himself, let him do it by twelve king's thegns. If the accused be less than a king's thegn, let him absolve himself by eleven of his equals, and one king's thegn."⁹ Here the number of twelve, and the principle of the peers, both appear to us.

Something of the principle of a jury appears to us in these laws: "If any one takes cattle, let five of his neighbours be named, and out of these, let him get one that will swear with him, that he took it to himself according to *folc-right*; and he that will implead him, let ten men be named to him, and let him get two of these and swear that it was born in his possession, without the *rim athe*, the oath of number, and let this *cyre* oath stand above twenty pennies."

"Let him who prays condemnation for a slain thief get two paternal and one maternal relation, and give the oath

⁶ Leg. Hloth. Wilk. p. 8.

⁷ Leg. Wiht. Wilk. p. 12.

⁸ Leg. Inæ. Wilk. 27.

⁹ Wilk. p. 47.

“ that they knew of no theft in their kinsman, and that he
 “ did not deserve death for that crime; and let some twelve
 “ go and try him.”¹⁰

This passage seems to have an allusion to this subject:

“ Let there be named, in the district of every gerefa, as
 “ many men as are known to be unlying men, that they may
 “ witness every dispute, and be the oaths of these unlying
 “ men of the value of the property without choice.”¹¹ These
 men, so named, may have been the rim æwda men noticed
 before.

“ If any kill a thief that has taken refuge within the time
 “ allowed, let him compensate for the mund byrde; or let
 “ some twelve absolve him that he knew not the juris-
 “ diction.”¹²

This injunction seems also to provide a jury: On an accusa-
 tion of idolatry or witchcraft, “ if it be a king’s thegn who
 “ denies it, let there be then named to him twelve, and let
 “ him take twelve of his relations, and twelve strangers; and
 “ if he fails, let him pay for the violation of the law, or ten
 “ half marcs.”¹³ This seems a jury: twelve persons were to
 be appointed, and he was to add twelve of his kinsfolks;
 and this law concerning Northumbria, where they were
 chiefly Danes, as many foreigners were to be added. If
 they absolved him, he was cleared; if not, he was to be
 mulcted. It is one of the rules established concerning our
 jury, that a foreigner has a right to have half of the jury
 foreigners.

The following law of Ethelred has the same application:

“ Let there be gemots in every wæpentace; and let twelve
 “ of the eldest thegns go out with the gerefa, and swear on the
 “ relics, which shall be given into their hands, that they will
 “ condemn no innocent man, nor screen any that is guilty.”¹⁴

¹⁰ Wilk. p. 58.

¹¹ Ib. 62.

¹² Ib. 63.

¹³ Wilk. 100.

¹⁴ Ib. 117.

This passage seems to have no meaning but so far as it alludes to a jury.

Two other laws are as applicable: "If any be accused that he has fed the man who hath broken our lord's peace, let him absolve himself with thrinna twelve, and let the gerefafa name the absolving persons; and this law shall stand where the thegns are of the same mind. If they differ, let it stand as eight of them shall declare."¹⁵ This is surely a jury, of whom eight constituted the legal majority.

There is another passage, in the laws made by the English witan and the Welsh counsellors, which bears upon this subject: "Twelve lahmén, of whom six shall be English and six shall be Welsh, shall enjoin right. They shall lose all that they have if they enjoin erroneously, or absolve themselves that they knew no better."¹⁶

On the whole, it would seem that the custom of letting the oaths of a certain number of men determine legal disputes in favour of the person for whom they swore, was the origin of the English jury. It was an improvement on this ancient custom, that the jurators were named by the court instead of being selected by the parties. It was a further progress towards our present mode of jury, that the jurators were to hear the statements of both parties before they gave their deciding veredictum, or oath of the truth. While the ordeals were popular, the trials by jurators were little used; but as these blind appeals to Heaven became unfashionable, the process of the legal tribunals was more resorted to, and juries became more frequent.¹⁷

¹⁵ Wilk. p. 118.

¹⁶ Ib. 125.

¹⁷ The following passage in the old law-book, the Mirror, shews that jurors were used in the time of Alfred. It says of this king,

"Il pendist les suitors d'Dorcester, pur ceo que ils judgerent un home a la mort per jurors de lour franchise pur felony que il fist; en le forrein et dount ils ne puissent conustre pur la forrainte." p. 300.

CH. 17.

This passage seems to have no meaning but so far as it relates

to a jury. Two other laws are applicable: "If any be accused (but

he be not the man who hath broken our law, let him

"him absolve himself with thirty oaths, and let the king

"name the accusing persons; and this law shall stand where

"the thegn and of the king stand. If they differ, let it

"stand as each of them shall desire." This is surely a

jury, of whom each constituted the legal majority.

There is another passage, in the law made by the English

king and the Welsh councillors, which bears upon the sub-

ject: "I will be judge of whom six shall be English and

"six shall be Welsh shall choose right. They shall lose all

"that they have if they err in error only, or otherwise their

"selves that they know no better."

On the whole, it would seem that the custom of having the

oaths of a certain number of men determining legal disputes in

favour of the person for whom they swore, was the origin of

the English jury. It was an improvement on the ancient

custom, that the jurors were named by the court instead of

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towards our present mode of jury, that the jurors were to

hear the statements of both parties before they gave their

deciding verdict, or oath of the truth. While the oaths

were popular, the trials by jurors were little used; but as

these blind appeals to eleven became inadmissible, the

process of the legal tribunals was more resorted to, and juries

became more frequent."

and perhaps so was the

in the time of Alfred. It says of this law, "consent was to be taken, p. 200.

HISTORY
OF THE
ANGLO-SAXONS.

BOOK XII.

Their Poetry, Literature, Arts, and Sciences.

CHAP. I.

Their Native or Vernacular Poetry.

POETRY has been always classed among the most interesting productions of the human mind; and few topics of human research are more curious than the history of this elegant art, from its rude beginning to that degree of excellence to which it has long been raised by our ingenious countrymen.

In no country can the progress of the poetical genius and taste be more satisfactorily traced than in our own. During that period which it is the office of this work to commemorate, it existed in a rude and barbaric state. It could, indeed, have been scarcely more uncultivated, to have been at all discernible. Towards the close of the Anglo-Saxon æra it began to lay aside its homely dress and coarser features, and to be preparing to assume the style, the measures, and the subjects,

CHAP.

I.

BOOK
XII.

which in a future age were so happily displayed as to deserve the notice of the latest posterity.

The poetry of the Anglo-Saxons was of two sorts; the poems which they composed in their own tongue, and the poems which they wrote in Latin. These two kinds of poetry were completely distinct from each other—distinct in origin, distinct in style.

Their Native
Poetry.

The characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon native poetry seem to be these: it consists chiefly of periphrasis, and metaphors expressed in a metrical but simple arrangement of words, with some alliteration. The usual particles are most frequently omitted; and the intended meaning is conveyed in short and contracted phrase, multiplied by the periphrasis and metaphor. The position of the words is forced out of their natural arrangement by a wilful inversion, and the regular course of the subject is frequently interrupted by violent and abrupt transitions. By these peculiarities, which seem to be quite artificial, the Saxon poetry is distinguished from prose.

Their
Periphrasis.

The most ancient piece of Anglo-Saxon poetry which we possess is that fragment of the song of the ancient Cædmon which Alfred has inserted in his translation of Bede. Cædmon was a monk who accustomed himself to religious poetry, which he began late in life. He died in 680.

The fragment, which has descended to us, he made on waking in a stall of oxen which he was appointed to guard during the night:

Now we should praise
The Guardian of the heavenly kingdom;
The mighty Creator,
And the thoughts of his mind,
Glorious Father of his works!
As he, of every glory
Eternal Lord!
Established the beginning;

Nu we sceolan herigean
Heafon rices weard;
Metodes mihte,
And his mod gethanc,
Weorc wuldor fæder!
Swa he wuldres gehwæs
Ece drihten!
Ord onstealde;

¹ Bede, ix. 24.

So he first shaped
The earth for the children of men,
And the heav'ns for its canopy.
Holy Creator!
The middle region,
The Guardian of Mankind,
The Eternal Lord,
Afterwards made
The ground for men,
Almighty Ruler!

He ærest gescop!
Eorþan bearnum,
Heofon to rofe.
Halig scyppend!
Tha middan geard,
Mon cynnes weard,
Ece drihtne,
Æfter teode
Firum foldan;
Frea almihtig!

Alfred's Bede, 597.

In these eighteen lines the periphrasis is peculiarly evident. Eight lines are occupied by so many phrases to express the Deity. These repetitions are very abruptly introduced; sometimes they come in like so many interjections:

The Guardian of the heavenly kingdom;
The mighty Creator—
Glorious Father of his works!—
Eternal Lord!—
Holy Creator!
The Guardian of Mankind,
The Eternal Lord—
Almighty Ruler!

Three more of the lines are used for the periphrasis of the first making the world:

he established the beginning;
he first shaped—
he afterwards made—

Three more lines are employed to express the earth as often by a periphrasis:

The earth for the children of men—
The middle region—
The ground for men—

So that of eighteen lines, the periphrasis occupies fourteen, and in so many lines only conveys three ideas; and all that

BOOK
XII.

the eighteen lines express is simply the first verse of the book of Genesis, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

No Saxon poem can be inspected without the periphrasis being found to be the leading characteristic. The elegant Menology in the Cotton Library displays it in its very beginning:

Crist wæs acennyd
Cyninga wuldor
On midne winter:
Mære theoden!
Ece ælmihtig!
On thy eahteothan dæg
hælend gehaten
Heofon rices weard.

Christ was born
the King of Glory
in mid-winter:
illustrious King!
eternal! almighty!
On the eighth day
he was called the Saviour,
Ruler of heaven's kingdom.

As all the specimens of their native poetry which will be adduced in this chapter will be found to abound with periphrastical amplifications, it will be unnecessary to introduce more instances here.

Their
Metaphors.

Their periphrasis is always mingled with metaphors; and as these will be found very frequent in the subsequent citations, they need not be particularized. One striking instance will suffice, which we will take from Cedmon's periphrasis and metaphors to express the ark; he calls it successively, the ship, the sea-house, the greatest of watery chambers, the ark, the great sea-house, the high mansion, the holy wood, the house, the great sea-chest, the greatest of treasure-houses, the vehicle, the mansion, the house of the deep, the palace of the ocean, the cave, the wooden fortress, the floor of the waves, the receptacle of Noah, the moving roof, the feasting-house, the bosom of the vessel, the nailed building, the ark of Noah, the vehicle of the ark, the happiest mansion, the building of the waves, the foaming ship, the happy receptacle.

Their Omission of Particles.

Another prevailing feature of the Anglo-Saxon poetry was the omission of the little particles of speech, those abbrevia-

tions of language which are the invention of man in the more cultivated ages of society, and which contribute to express our meaning more discriminatingly, and to make it more clearly understood. The prose and poetry of Alfred's translation of Boethius will enable us to illustrate this remark. Where the prose says, Thee the on tham ecan setle ricsast, "Thou who on the eternal seat reignest," the poetry of the same passage, Thee on heahsetle ecan ricsast, "Thou on high seat eternal reignest," omitting the explaining and connecting particles, the, and than. So, "Thou that on the seat," is again in the poetry, "Thou on seat." The Saxon of the little fragment of Cedmon is without particles.

Whoever looks into Anglo-Saxon poetry after being familiar with their prose, will perceive how uniformly barren their poems are of the discriminating and explanatory particles. He will likewise feel, in the difficulties which attend his construction of it, how much obscurity is created by their absence.

In prose, and in cultivated poetry, every conception of the author is clearly expressed and fully made out. In barbarous poetry, and in the Anglo-Saxon poetry, we have most commonly abrupt, imperfect hints, instead of regular description or narration. The poetical citations which follow will abundantly shew this. But that their poetry seeks to express the same idea in fewer words than prose, may be made apparent by one instance. Thus, the phrase in Alfred's prose, "So doth the moon with his pale light, that the bright stars he obscures in the heavens," is put by him in his poetry thus:

Their short
Phrases.

With pale light
Bright stars
Moon lesseneth.

Even when the same idea is multiplied by the periphrasis, the rest of the sentence is not extended either in meaning or

expression. One word or epithet is played upon by a repetition of synonymous expressions, but the meaning of the sentence is not increased by them.

Of their artificial inversion of their words and phrases in their poems, every specimen adduced will give evidence. It is quite different in their prose. The words follow there most commonly in an easy and natural order. The poem on Beowulf will give repeated instances of their abrupt and unconnected transitions. Their metre will be the subject of a separate chapter.

The poetry which pleases a refined age, has no more similarity to such poetry as we find to have been popular among the Anglo-Saxons, than the sonatas of Haydn, Mozart, or Beethoven, can be supposed to have to the boisterous music of our ancestors. Poetry, like painting and architecture, has attained to its perfection by slow degrees. The leaves of its laurel seem to have been the gradual contributions of genius and labour during many centuries. But at the period in which it is the province of this history to contemplate it, little else seems to have been done than the formation of a style of composition different from prose. If we call this style poetry, it is rather by complaisance than truth—rather with a knowledge of the excellencies afterwards introduced into it, than of those which it then possessed.

The barren and peculiar state of the Anglo-Saxon poetry leads us to infer, that it was rather the product of art than of nature. Its origin seems to have been as homely as its genius.

The origin of the periphrasis seems to be easily accounted for; a favourite chief or hero conquers, and is received on his return by the clamorous rejoicings of his people. One calls him brave; another, fierce; another, irresistible. He is pleased with the praises; and some one at his feast, anxious to engage his favour, repeats the various epithets with which he had been greeted:

Edmund,
the brave chief,
fierce in war!
irresistible in battle!
slaughtered his enemies
at _____.

This is in substance an Anglo-Saxon poem.

But when these addresses were found to interest the vanity of the chiefs, and to excite their liberality, more labour would be bestowed in the construction of the periphrasis; the compliment would be sometimes higher seasoned, and then the periphrasis would be raised into occasional metaphors: the hero would be called, the eagle of battle, the lord of shields, the giver of the bracelet, the helmet of his people; and the lady would be saluted as a beautiful elf.

The style of the Anglo-Saxon poetry seems to have been originally the common, imperfect language of the people, in its half-formed and barbarous state. When an infant first begins to talk, it uses only the nouns and pronouns of its language. By degrees it learns the use of a few verbs, which for some time it uses in their simplest forms, without any of their conjugations. The meaning of these is supplied by its actions, or is left to be guessed by its parent. The knowledge of the abbreviations, or the particles of language, is gradually attained. With our careful education, children acquire from us the habit of using them with fluency and correctness in a few years. But wild nations must have been some centuries without them.

All nations, who have formed their languages, have gone through the same process, in doing so, that our children are always exhibiting. The nouns, or the names of things, are at first their only language. Some of these, which signify visible action or motion, come at last to be used to express motion or action generally, or are added to other nouns, to express them in a state of action. These are what we now call verbs.

Hence nouns, nouns used as verbs, or thus converted into verbs, and others made pronouns, compose the whole of the language in the ruder ages of every uncivilized nation.

As the progress of society goes on, the abbreviations of language begin to be formed; words multiply, and the forms of using them to distinguish the various ideas of the human mind from each other, and to give determination and precision to its meaning, begin also to multiply. The conjugations of the verbs, and the declensions of nouns, are then invented, new sets of nouns receive being, and new meanings are given to the primitive nouns, as will be shewn in our chapter on language, till at length every language receives that multiplicity of terms and particles which form the copious and clear stream of expressive and cultivated prose. If a people narrate a tale in the full and copious period of their language, they will do it naturally in that easy and loquacious prose which forms the style of Herodotus, the oldest prose writer of Greece that has survived to us. But if the same tale was told by the ancestors of this people in their ruder state, when language had not acquired its abbreviations, nor the verbs their conjugations, nor the nouns their secondary meanings and derivative applications; and if that tale, so rudely told, were handed down faithfully by tradition in its rude state to the cultivated age—it would probably exhibit all the features of the Anglo-Saxon poetry—it would be without particles, without conjugations or declensions, with great contraction of phrase, with abrupt transitions, with violent metaphor and frequent periphrasis. The contraction of phrase would arise from the penury of their associations. The same poverty of mind and knowledge would make the periphrasis, or the retracing the same idea again and again, their easiest source of eloquence; and the violence of metaphor naturally arises from not having immediately new terms to express the new, or more intellectual ideas, that would every year be rising among an improving people; and therefore, till new words are

devised, the old names of real things are necessarily, though violently applied.

The metre of the Saxon poetry is the simplest that can be conceived, and is, indeed, often little else than a series of short exclamations. Its inversions are more artificial. But when music was applied to poetry, and men found it beneficial to sing or recite a chieftain's praise, we may conceive, that, to secure to themselves the profits of the profession, some little ingenuity was exerted to make difficulties which would raise their style above the vulgar phrase. Its inversion was one of the easiest modes of making a peculiar style of composition; and as society advanced in its attainments, the transition, the alliteration, and other ornaments, may have been added, either as new beauties or as new difficulties.

When the style of the nation had been improved into an easy and accurate prose, the ancient style may have been kept on foot by the bards of the chiefs from design, and by the people from habit and veneration. The old style would be long remembered by a nation, from respect to its ancestors, from that venerable air which it has from its antiquity, like the dialect and stanza of Spenser to us, which is always pleasing, and often imitated; and from the fact, that the ancient compositions which had become popular were in the ancient style.

Hence, independent of the interest which the bards would have to use the ancient style, because, by becoming more unlike the improving language of the improving people, it would remain more securely appropriated to them, and therefore more beneficial, the people, from habit and association, would also like it.

Thus humbly, it is conceived, the Anglo-Saxon poetry arose: at first the rude exclamations of a rude people, with a rude language, greeting their chieftains; soon repeated or imitated by some men, from the profit derived from it. When, from the improvement of the manners and state of the people, a

more cultivated style, or that we call prose, became general, because better fitted to the uses of life, then the old rude style dropped out of common use. The bards, however, retained and appropriated this, because more instrumental to their professional advantages. To enjoy these more exclusively, to secure their monopoly of credit and gifts, they added more difficulties to the style they adopted, to make it more remote from the vulgar attainment; till at length their poetical style became for ever separated from prose.

In thus considering our ancient poetry as an artificial and mechanical thing, cultivated by men chiefly as a trade, we must not be considered as confounding it with those delightful beauties which we now call poetry. These have arisen from a different source, and are of a much later chronology. They are the creations of subsequent genius. But these have been the flowers of the human fancy, springing up, not in its dark and ancient days, but in a succession of better times, during the many ages which followed, in which the general intellect of society being continually improving, taste and imagination improved also. The English fancy was cultivated with assiduous labour for many centuries before Chaucer arose, or could have arisen. True poetry is the offspring of cultivated mind. Art cannot produce it without nature, but neither can nature make it where art is wholly unknown. Hence, all that we owe to our Anglo-Saxon ancestors in poetry is, that, by accident or design, they perpetuated a style of composition different from the common language of the country, which gradually became appropriated to fancy and music. In happier times, genius, using it as the vehicle of its effusions, improved it by slow degrees, and enriched it with ever-succeeding beauties; till that rich stock of poetry has been created, which is the pride of our literature and country.

The history of the Saxon poetry, and, indeed, of all modern European poetry, in its ruder state, may be divided into

three heads: songs, or ballads; the lengthened narrative poems, or romances; and that miscellaneous kind which, if we term it lyric, it is more for the convenience of using a short generic word, than for the exact appropriation of its meaning. Under these three divisions shall be arranged all that can be collected on the Saxon poetry.

C H A P.

I.

That our ancestors had popular songs on the actions of their great or favourite characters, or on such other subjects as interested the vulgar mind, is proved by many instances, which may be traced in the ancient writers. Aldhelm, whose Latin poetry will be noticed, applied himself to compose songs, or ballads, in the Anglo-Saxon language, to instruct, as well as to amuse, his countrymen. Alfred inserted it as a remark in his Manual, that no one had ever appeared before Aldhelm so competent in English poetry; none had been able to compose so much, or to sing and recite it so appositely. The king mentions a popular ballad of Aldhelm's, which was in his time (that is, nearly two centuries afterwards) sung in the streets. Malmsbury adds, that Aldhelm, anxious to instruct his countrymen, then semibarbarous, and inattentive to their religious duties, took his station on the public bridge, as if a singer by profession, and, by mixing sacred with lighter topics, won their attention, and meliorated their minds.

The Saxon
Ballads.

None of Aldhelm's vernacular poetry has survived; but the circumstance above mentioned, that he composed and sang these ballads as if "he professed the art of singing,"² shew that the harpers of the day were accustomed to recite them. That such things were then in general circulation is also implied by Bede, when he mentions, that in a festive company the harp was sent round, that those might sing who could.³

It was a book of Saxon poems which first allured Alfred to learn to read;⁴ and the fact, that he had his children taught to read Saxon poems,⁵ and that he himself visited the Danish

² Malmsb. 3 Gale, 339.

³ Bede, l. iv. c. 24.

⁴ Asser.

⁵ Ib.

camp as a harper,⁶ which, in the reign of his grandson, Anlaf imitated,⁷ prove the existence of popular songs, which interested both the child and the rude warrior.

These songs, or ballads, are also mentioned on other occasions. When Malmsbury, after narrating the reign of Athelstan, proceeds to describe his origin from Edward's amour with a shepherd's daughter, he says, "The following facts I have taken rather from the songs (cantilenis) worn out by the course of time, than from books composed for the instruction of posterity."⁸

When Malmsbury has to mention the adulteries of Edgar, he endeavours to lessen their historical authority by saying, "The other infamies which I shall mention have been rather diffused by ballads," (cantilenæ).⁹

These popular songs occur to us again in the ancient life of Dunstan. He is there said to have learnt "the vain songs of his nation."¹⁰ He was also at that time a player upon the harp.

A curious fragment of a ballad composed by Canute the Great has survived to us," which gives us a specimen of the measure which this kind of poetry had attained in his time. As he was sailing by the abbey in the isle of Ely, he heard the monks chanting their psalms and anthems, and was so struck with the interesting melody, that he composed a little Saxon ballad on the occasion, which began thus:

Merrē rungen ðe munecher binnen Ely,
Tha Enut ching neudeþ by;
Ropeð, Eniter, noep ðe land,
And hepe pe ðer munecher rang.

Merry sang the monks in Ely,
When Canute the king was sailing by;
"Row, ye Knights, near the land,
"And let us hear these monks' song."

The historical ballads of the Saxons on the actions of their popular favourites are also intimated by Ingulf, the Conqueror's secretary. In his account of the chivalric hero,

⁶ Malmsb. 43.

⁷ Ib. 48.

⁸ Ib. 52.

⁹ Malm. 56.

¹⁰ MS. Cleop. B. 13.

¹¹ Hist. Elien.—3 Gale, 505.

Hereward, who flourished in the time of Edward the Confessor and afterwards, he says, "His brave actions were sung in England."¹² In another passage, the monk informs us that Hereward died at last in peace, and was buried in their monastery, "after great battles, and a thousand dangers, frequently dared against the king, earls, barons, and magistrates, and bravely achieved, as is yet sung in the streets."¹³ We may close our authorities by stating, that William of Malmsbury mentions, that the ballad (cantilena) of Roland was began to be sung before the battle of Hastings, to excite a martial spirit in the combatants.¹⁴

Two of the historical songs of our ancestors, and some fragments of others, have been preserved in the Saxon Chronicle, in which they have been inserted as part of the Chronicle. As one of the songs on Edgar's death has not been hitherto brought before the English public, and the other, on Ethelstan's victory, has been given with an incorrect translation, I will add a version of both.

The Song on Ethelstan's Victory at Brunanburh.

Here Athelstan king,
of earls the lord,
the giver of the bracelets of the nobles,
and his brother also,
Edmund the ætheling,
the Elder! a lasting glory
won by slaughter in battle
with the edges of swords
at Brunan burh.
The wall of shields they cleaved,
they hewed the noble banners:
the survivors of the family,
the children of Edward.
As to them it was natural
from their ancestry,
that they in the field often
against every enemy

their land should defend,
their treasures and homes.

Pursuing, they destroyed
the Scottish people—
and the ship-fleet.
They fell dead!
the field resounded!
the warriors sweat!
After that the sun
rose in the morning hour,
the greatest star!
glad above the earth,
God's candle bright!
the eternal Lord's!
till the noble creature
hastened to her setting.

¹² Ingulf, p. 67.

¹³ Ibid. 68.

¹⁴ Malmsb. p. 101.

BOOK
XII.

There lay soldiers many
with darts struck down,
Northern men,
over their shields shot.
So were the Scotch;
weary of ruddy battle.

The West Saxons then
throughout the day,
with a chosen band,
to the last pressed
on the loathed people.
They hewed the fugitives of the army,
the behind ones, fiercely
with swords sharpened at the mill.

The Mercians did not refuse
the hard hand-play
with any of those men
that, with Anlaf,
over the turbid sea,
in the bosom of the ship,
sought the land
for deadly fight.

Five lay
in that battle place,
young kings,
by swords quieted:
so also seven,
the earls of Anlaf,
and innumerable of the army
of the fleet—and the Scots.

There was chased away
the lord of the Northmen,
driven by necessity
to the voice of the ship.
With a small host,
with the crew of his ship,
the king of the fleet
departed out on the yellow flood;
his life preserved.

So there also the routed one,
a fugitive, came
to his northern country;
Constantinus:
the hoarse din of Hilda

he needed not to vociferate
in the commerce of swords,
he was the fragment of his relations;
of his friends felled in the folk-place,
slain in the battle:

And his son he left
on the place of slaughter
with wounds beaten down.
Young in the conflict,
he would not boast;
the lad with flaxen hair,
from the bill of death,
tho' old in wit.

Nor more then Anlaf,
with the residue of their armies
had need to exult,
that they for works of battle
were better
in the place of combat,
in the prostration of the banners,
in the meeting of the arrows,
in the assembly of men,
in the exchange of weapons,
when they on the field of slaughter
against Edward's
descendants played.

Departed from them, then
the Northmen,
in nailed ships,
the dreary relics of the darts,
on the stormy sea,
over the deep water,
sought Dublin,
and their land,
disgraced in mind.

So the brothers
both together,
the king and the ætheling,
their country sought,
the West-Saxon land.

The screamers of war
they left behind,
the raven to enjoy,
the dismal kite,

and the black raven
with horned beak;
and the hoarse toad;
the eagle, afterwards
to feast on the white flesh;
the greedy battle-hawk,
and the grey beast,
the wolf in the wood.

Nor had there been a greater slaughter
in this island
ever yet
of people destroyed,

before this
by the edges of swords,
(This is what the books tell us
of the old wise men)
since from the East hither
the Angles and the Saxons
came up
over the broad waves,
and sought the Britons.

The illustrious smiths of war!
the Welsh, they overcame;
the earls excelling in honor!
and obtained the country.

In this song we may observe this artless order: in the two first paragraphs, the actions of Athelstan and his brother are recited. The West Saxons and the Mercians are then separately praised. The fate of their enemies follows. The deaths of the five kings and seven earls are commemorated. Anlaf's flight and escape are sung, and Constantine's, whose son fell in the conflict. The poet then exults in the superior prowess of his countrymen. He conducts the remains of the defeated army to Dublin, and the victorious princes into West Saxony. He closes his song with two poetical common-places; one on the birds of prey, who crowd the field of battle, and the other on the superiority of this victory to all former ones.

The song on Edgar's death is much shorter:

Here ended
his earthly joys—
Edgar, England's king:
he chose for himself another light,
beautiful and pleasant;
and left this feeble life,
which the children of the nations,
the men on earth,
call so transitory.
On that month which every where
in this country's soil
they, that were before
in the art of numbers

rightly instructed,
call July;
in his youth departed
on the eighteenth day,
Edgar from life—
the giver of the bracelets of the nobles:
and his son took
afterwards to the kingdom:
a child not full grown;
the ruler of earls;
Edward was his name,
an excelling hero.

BOOK
XII.

Ten nights before
 from Britain departed
 the bishop so good
 in native mind,
 Cyneward was his name.
 Then was in Mercia,
 to my knowledge,
 wide and every where
 the praise of the Supreme Governor
 destroyed on the earth.
 Many were disturbed
 of God's skilful servants.
 Then was much groaning
 to those that in their breasts
 carried the burning love
 of their Creator in their mind.
 Then was the Source of miracles
 so much despised,
 the Governor of victory ;
 the Lawgiver of the sky ;
 when man broke his rights.
 And then was also driven
 the beloved man,
 Oslac, from the earth,
 over the rolling of the waves,

over the bath of the sea-fowl,
 the long-haired hero,
 wise, and in words discreet,
 over the roaring of the waters,
 over the country of the whales;
 of an home deprived.

And then was shewn
 up in the sky
 a star in the firmament.
 This the firm of spirit,
 the men of skilful mind,
 call extensively
 a comet by name,
 men skilled in art,
 wise truth-tellers.

There was over the nation
 the vengeance of the Supreme.
 Widely spread
 hunger over the mountains.
 That again Heaven's
 Ruler removed ;
 the Lord of angels !
 He again gave bliss
 to every inhabitant
 by the earth's fertility.

These historical songs have none of the story, nor the striking traits of description which interest us in the ballads of a subsequent age. In the Saxon songs we see poetry in its rudest form, before the art of narration was understood. The simplicity of the ballad deceives us into a belief that it is the easy and natural performance of the less cultivated ages of society. But the truth seems to be, that the excellence of the ballad is as difficult of attainment as any other species of approved poetry, and is the result not merely of genius, but also of great cultivation. In the ruder ages of nations, the ballad is the sort of poetry the most frequently composed and the most generally recited. The incessant cultivation of this particular species creates at least an excellence in it which subsequent ages do not attain, because other departments of

the Parnassian art are then attended to, and the ballad becomes less used. CHAP.
I.

The song of Canute on Ely was the composition of the eleventh century; and, being much later written than that on Athelstan, and therefore of a more cultivated kind, seems to have approached nearer that lively and dramatic form which interests us so much in the ballads of the following ages. This little fragment is, indeed, the oldest specimen of the dramatic or genuine ballad which we have in the Anglo-Saxon language.

The genuine ballad seems to have originated when the old Saxon poetry began to decline. The laboured metaphor, the endless periphrasis, the violent inversion, and the abrupt transition, were the great features of the Saxon poetry. These constituted that pompousness which William of Malmsbury truly states to have been its great characteristic. But it was impossible that, while these continued prevalent and popular, the genuine ballad could have appeared. The ballad, therefore, probably arose from more vulgar and homely poets—from men who could not bend language into that difficult and artificial strain which the genius of the Anglo-Saxon bard was educated to use. The ambulatory glee-men who strove to please the public by their merry-andrew antics, were most probably the first inventors of the genuine ballad. While at one time they tumbled and danced, shewed their bears, and frolicked before the people in the dresses of various animals, at others they may have told little tales to interest the mob, from whose liberality they drew their maintenance.

Incidents narrated in verse were more intelligible than the pompous songs of the regular poets, and far more interesting to the people. In time they gained admission to the hall and the palace; and, by the style of Canute's ballad, this revolution must have been achieved by the beginning of the eleventh century. Then the harsh and obscure style of the old Saxon poetry began to be unpopular; and being still more discre-

BOOK
XII.Saxon Narrative Poems,
or Romances.

dited after the Norman conquest, it was at length completely superseded by the ballad and the metrical romance.

The origin of the metrical romance has been lately an interesting subject of literary research ; and as it has not been yet completely elucidated, it seems proper to enquire whether any light can be thrown upon it from the ancient Saxon poetry.

It was asserted by Mr. Ritson, in conformity with the prevailing opinion of antiquaries, that the Anglo-Saxons had no poetical romance in their native tongue. But he grounds this opinion on the fact, that no romance had been at that time discovered in Saxon but a prose translation from the Latin of the legend of Apollonius of Tyre. The Anglo-Saxon poem on Beowulf, first described in the former edition of this history, proves that this opinion was erroneous. This poem is certainly a metrical romance in the Anglo-Saxon language. It is the most interesting relic of the Anglo-Saxon poetry which time has suffered us to receive. It is in the Cotton Library, Vitellius, A. 15. The subject is the expedition of Beowulf, to wreak the fæhthe, or deadly feud, on Hrothgar, for a homicide which he had committed. It abounds with speeches which Beowulf and Hrothgar, and their partisans, make to each other, with much occasional description and sentiment.

It begins with this introduction :

Poem on
Beowulf's
expedition.

What have we not in the world,
in former days,
heard of the glory
of the Theod-kings ?
How the ethelings
in strength excelled !
Oft the scýld of the race of Scefá,
from hosts of enemies,
from many tribes,
the mead of the seats withdrew.

The earl diffused terror,

since that he was first
of property found destitute.
He for this consolation waited ;
that he should increase under the sky
in honours :
when that each
of those sitting about
over the path of the whale
him should serve,
to him should yield obedience.

The poet immediately adds the birth, name, and praise of his hero :

There was a good king :
to this man was offspring
afterwards born,
young in the world.
This God sent
as a comfort to the people ;
for the sake of their need.
The Ruler knew
that they had before suffered
a long while.
To him the Lord of this life,
the Governor of glory,
the world's honours gave.
BEOWULF was illustrious,
The fruit wide sprung

of the progeny of the scyld,
shed upon the lands
in Swascedi.

He rejoiced to do good,
with liberal money gifts,
in seasonable time.

Then him at length
again joined, as usual,
his voluntary companions.
When he knew of battle,
the people followed.
With deeds of praise,
every where among the nations,
shall the hero flourish !

The author now opens his subject, by describing Beowulf conducting his followers to his ship, and beginning an expedition :

With them the scyld
departed to the ship :
while many were prone
to go with their lord.
They carried him out
to the ocean-journey,
as his companions.
So he himself bade them,
when with words he governed
the scyldingi of battle.
The chieftainship of the dear land
long he possessed.

There at the post he stood :
his voice sounded on the ice,
and the expedition of the etheling
was ready.

They led the dear king,
the lord of the bracelets,
the illustrious one,
to the bosom of the ship.
Of food there was

a great provision ;
collected to be eaten
on distant waves.
I never heard of a more kinglike
ship prepared,
with the weapons of Hilda,
and noble garments ;
with bills and mails.
Of these, in its bosom
lay many chests,
that with them should depart,
far on the territory of the floods.
Nor did they less
draw into it of presents,
the wealth of the people ;
when they laboured
that they might send it forth,
like a shaft to the Ælfri,
alone over the waves.

Then they placed in it
the gilt banner,
high over head.
They let the waters bear it

BOOK
XII.

a present to the ocean.

To them it was, that a sorrowing spirit,
a mourning mind,
the men knew not.

They said, indeed,

that a mansion should be given
under the heavens to the man
who from them should take it lading.

After this narration, the sections or books begin. The first section introduces to us the chief against whom Beowulf had made his expedition. This was Hrothgar, the son of Healfden. The old king is first mentioned whom Healfden and his sons had deposed and destroyed :

There was in the cities
of Beowulf the scyldinga
a king dear to his people,
for a long time
by the people honoured
as a father.
But from the earth
the elder departed,
when against him arose
Healfden, the high chieftain.
While the old man lived,
and Guthreow,
the glad scyldingi
to them four children
numbered.

When in the world there sprang
leaders of hosts!

Heorogar, and Hrothgar,
and Halgatil :

I heard that the queen,
the wife of his bosom,
hid the noble scyldingi.

When to Hrothgar
the wealth of the army was given,
the honour of the battle,
then his male relations
diligently obeyed him.

When the youth grew up
great lord of his relations,

The old king appears to have made a feast :

It came into his mind
that the men to the hall-house
he would call.
Much mead
they hastened to prepare.
This the children of men
always required :
and there within
he shared all,
with the young and old,
as to him God had given,

except the country of his people
and the lives of his men.

Then I heard widely
the business proclaimed.

Many tribes
over this world
the station of the people adorned.—

When it was all ready,
the great hall-chamber,
the poet named it Heort :
he that of his words
had extensive power.

At this meeting it is intimated by what follows, that Hrothgar perpetrated the homicide of which Beowulf afterwards com-

plains, and which he endeavoured to revenge. But the narration is so inartificially conducted, and the transitions are so rapid, and their meaning so indistinct, that it is not easy to perceive the course of the story. Hrothgar seems to be the person alluded to in the next sentence :

He threatened,
that he would not take the bracelets,
nor share the treasure at the feast ;
the loud joy of the hall,
and the horn.

The deceitful chieftain

expected the fury
of the odious flame.
Nor was it long before the warrior
by his cruelty excited them
to swear hatred against him.

The author then touches on the mirth of the feast :

Then every day
he heard joy
loud in the hall.
There was the harp's
shrill sound.

The song of the poet likewise,
he that knew
the origin of men,
tho' remote, to narrate.

The festivity was suddenly interrupted by Hrothgar's executing his machinations while the chief was asleep.

He seized wilfully,
on his upper side,
the sleeping soldier.

He struck the unwary one
with his club,
on the bone of the locks.

This action is enlarged upon.—The mind of Hrothgar, alarmed at his own crime, is thus described :

He in his soul
was terrified ;
in spirit he was not as before,
strenuous with might ;
nor was his mind to him
an obedient servant.

He would into a cave
fly, to seek devils.
He had no restraint :
he conversed with them there,
as in former days
he had already sought them.

The escape of Beowulf from Heorot, the mansion or fortress of Hrothgar, is then mentioned ; and the poet concludes his first section with these reflections on the origin of murder :

The Almighty made the earth ;
plains of bright beauty !

so the water-beds
he inclined.

BOOK
XII.

He established the setting
of the fiery sun,
and the light of the moon,
to enlighten the earth's inhabitants;
and he adorned the regions of the world
with light and leaves.
He created life also
for every species
of those that alike revolve.
So did the Lord of men.
With joy mankind lived happily
till that began
to make crimes
the fiend in hell.
This spirit was the most grim.
The hot grendl
betrayed his footsteps.
He rules the moors,
the fen, and fastness,
in the country of the Fifel race.

Hapless man dwelt awhile,
till the Creator
had driven him out.
On Cain's offspring
avenged the slaughter,
the eternal Lord;
on him that Abel slew.
He could not rejoice
in that fæbthe.
But to be hated for it
the Creator made his punishment
for his crime to mankind.
From thence arose
all the unfruitful ones,
the Jutes and the Ylf,
and the Orcneas,
such giants
as fought against God,
for a long time,
till he returned them the retribution.

The second section is chiefly occupied in describing the sorrow excited by the dismal act, Hrothgar's subsequent tyrannical conduct, and the desire of revenge among the scyldingi.

The third section opens with mentioning the anxiety of Hrothgar, the son of Healfden, for what he had done, and its consequences:

Nor could the wary man
avert the misfortune.
Very hateful and long
was the war
that on his people was coming.
To revenge the iniquity

of that grim night of evil,
the deeds of the grendl,
was chiefly required
from the thegn of Higelac,
so exalted among the Jutes.

This thegn was Beowulf, whose panegyric is continued, and his expedition described, with which the poem had begun.

He was of mankind
the strongest in might
in those days;
in this life ennobled:

and he also commanded
a good ship of the waves
to prepare.
He said,

the war-king!
that over the road of the swans
he would seek
the famed chieftain.
But that he had need of men
for that expedition,
skilful ceorls,
who a while should attend it:
they who to him were dear.
Their aspiring minds were excited;
the good omen was shewn;
the good Jute
had to sail,
chosen soldiers;
of those that he might find
the bravest;
they sought the wood of the ocean.
The warrior taught
to the sea-crafty men
the land-marks.
Soon the vessel departed.
Then was on the waves
the ship under the mountains.

The warriors, ready at his voice,
descended the streams.

He then departed
over the sea-way,
hastened by the winds.
Their streamer floated
like the neck of a bird,
till they had gone
the space of another day.

Then the sailors
beheld the land,
the sea-cliffs,
the steep shining mountains,
the ample sea promontory.
Thence up quickly
the weather-beaten men
ascended into the plain
from the sea-wood seat.
They shook their garment,
the clothing of battle.
They thanked God for this,
that to them the wave journey
had smoothly happened.

The author then describes their being discovered by their enemy:

Then from the wall
he that the sea-cliff should guard
beheld the warder of scyldingi
bear over the hills
the bright shields,
the instruments of battle.
Instantly he inflamed the fire-pit
in the doubts of his mind
what these men were.
The thegn of Hrothgar with his host
went straight then
to ride to the shore of the conflict.
The powerful wood
he shook in his hands;
he asked counsel by his words.
“What are the designs
of this mail-clad host,

that thus have brought this warlike ship
over the streets of the sea?
Come they hither over the ocean,
injuring every where the settled people?
The land of the Danes
holds nothing more odious
than ship-plunderers.—
Now I will your origin know
before that far hence,
like false spies,
on this celebrated land
you shall further go now.
Band of sea-dwellers!
hear my simple thought;
it will be best to tell with speed
why you have come here.”

The author then gives Beowulf's answer to this address:

Him answered
the eldest of the host.
He unlocked his treasure
of wise words.
"We are of the race
of the Jute people,
and Higelac's hæarth-geneat
was my father,
to the world known:
of noble origin,
Ecgtheow called.
He remained a number of winters
before he departed away,
old with years.
Him promptly well knew
each of the witan, wide over the earth.
We from faithful mind

thy lord, the son of Healfden,
come to seek—
we have to him
a much greater errand
to the lord of the Danes,
nor shall this
to any be hidden.
This I think,
that thou knowest if it be,
as we have heard say,
that with the scyldingi
some devil deeds of hate
in the dark night appeared.—
I to this Hrothgar will,
by my extended thought,
teach, counsel how the wise God
conquers his enemies."—

The warder answered him; Beowulf anchored his ships, and
advanced; and a messenger went to carry the tidings to
Hrothgar.

Stony was the way;
the enemy knew the path.
With their men together,
the mail of battle shone hard,
closed by hands.

The sheer iron
rung upon the warlike instruments.
Then they to the mansion-house,
in all their terrors,
were delighted to go.

On his advancing again, one of Hrothgar's party addressed
them:

"Where do you carry
your thick shields,
your grey vests
and grim helms,
and a heap of the shafts of war?
I am Hrothgar's
messenger and attendant.
Never have I seen
so many strangers
more animated.
I think your splendid host,
for the paths of revenge,

for the glory of mind,
must seek Hrothgar."

Him then answered
the illustrious in valour
of the wealthy weather-people,
the Ruler, under his helmet,
with a word after the speech.

"We are Higelac's table-geneats.
Beowulf is my name.
I will speak to the son of Healfdan,

to the great chief, thy ruler,
my errand,
if he will permit us."—

Wulfgar then addressed them.
He was of the Wendil people.
His mind-thoughts were told to many
with wit and wisdom.

"I this man of Denmark,
the ruler of the scyldingi,
the lord of bracelets,
will ask,
Art thou a petitioner to the great chief
about thy way?

Thus then answered
the other to say,
"Be that to me
as God thinketh to give."

He turned then speedily
to where Hrothgar sat,
supreme and not hoary,
with his earls.—

Wulfgar addressed
his beloved lord:

"Here are men,
come from afar
over the sea,
inhabitants of the Jute region:
the chief of the family
they call Beowulf:
they are petitioners,
that they, my king,
with thee may exchange words.
Now, do thou beware of him.

Hrothgar said,
"The helm of the scyldingi!
I knew him when a boy.
His eald-father
was called Ecgtheo.
Hrethel, the Jute,
gave him his daughter.
The leader here come
is his offspring."

Hrothgar sent a peaceful message to Beowulf:

"Say to them with words
that they are welcome
to the Danish people.
Forbid them not!
I command you to say
to the lord of victory,
the ruler of the east Danes,
that he your noble one,
and ye who with him
were hard struggling
over the rage of the sea,

are welcome hither.—
Let the shield of war
here abide;
the wooden shafts of slaughter,
the messengers of the council of fate.
About the warrior
of threatening thanes
a great number abide,
and the noble plunder guard:
as the ruler bade them,
so they obeyed.

On Beowulf's introduction to Hrothgar, in Heorot, a conference ensued:

BEOWULF spake.
On him the mail shone;
the silver net was sewed
with a smith's care.

"Thou, Hrothgar, hail!
I am the kinsman of Higelac:

and a born thegn.
I have begun many enterprizes.
In my youth
the affair of the Grendl
was known,
was manifest to me,

BOOK
XII.

in my native soil.
 The sailors say
 that this spacious hall
 stands empty and deprived
 of some of its best warriors,
 since that evening's light
 under the serene heavens
 was obscured.
 When my people
 informed me,
 the good and prudent ceorls,
 that Hrothgar governed,
 then I sought thee:
 because they knew my skill and power,
 and are careless of themselves.
 Thus I come
 the enemy of treachery,
 even from enemies.
 I have slain
 five bands of the Jute race,
 and on the waves
 your knights.
 Necessity compelled it:
 the vengeance,
 for the shameful crime of their fathers;
 rage for the Grendl.—
 But of thee now,
 bright lord of the Danes,
 I will ask one prayer.
 Shelter of thy soldiers!
 Lord of the battle-folk!
 do not deny me,
 as I have thus far come,
 that I,
 the chief of my own ceorls,
 and of this band of warriors,
 may expiate Heorot.

This speech Hrothgar answered with some civility, and invited him to the feast.

Then was the bench spread
 for the Jute men together
 in the beer-hall;

The miserable one
 for the rashness of his weapons cared
 not.

I will then struggle with him.
 As Higelac was my lord,
 blithe of mind,
 I will bear the sword,
 the ample shield,
 the yellow buckler,
 to the battle,
 and with a grasp
 I will seize my enemy,
 and for life contend;
 hating against the hateful one.
 Then let him abide
 the judgment of the Lord,
 he whom death taketh.
 I know that, if he can,
 he will subdue the Jute people
 in the battle-hall.
 But from me he shall have
 a dearly-purchased ruin.
 If death taketh me,
 bear me from the bloody slaughter
 to my grave,
 and think that ye have consumed
 a solitary warrior
 unlamenting.
 Nor need ye long grieve
 about the life of my body.
 If Hilda takes me away,
 send to Higelac
 my battle-garments,
 the best that my breast wears,
 the choicest of my clothes,
 the work of foreigners.
 Let Fortune go as she chooses."

there the fierce spirits
 went to sit in crowds.
 The thegn arranged them.

He beheld the necessity.
The cup-bearer,
laden with the ale,
served the divided host :

the poet awhile
sang peace in Heorot.
There was the joy of men.

While they were feasting, a new speaker appears, who is introduced, as almost all the personages in the poem are, with some account of his person and character.

Hunferthe spoke,
the son of Ecglaf;
who had sat at the foot
of the lord of the scyldingi
among the band of the battle mystery.
To go in the path of Beowulf,
was to him a great pride;
he was zealous
that to him it should be granted,
that no other man
ever acquired under heaven
more of the world's glory
than himself.

"Art thou Beowulf?
he that with such profit
dwells in the expansive sea,

amid the contests of the ocean?
There ye for riches go!
you try for deceitful glory
in deep waters.
Ye sleep not with your ancestors,
nor can any man,
whether dear or odious,
restrain you from the sorrowful path.
There ye with eye-streams
to the miserable flourish.
You meet in the sea-street;
you oppress with your hands;
you glide over the ocean.
On the waves of the sea
the fury of winter rages,
yet on the watery domain
seven nights have ye toiled."

After Hunferthe, another character is introduced:

Dear to his people,
of the land of the Brondingi;
the Lord of fair cities,
where he had people,
barks, and bracelets,
Ealwith, the son of Beandane,
the faithful companion
menaced.

"Then I think
worse things will be to thee,
thou noble one!
Every where the rush
of grim battle will be made.
If thou darest the grendles,
the time of a long night
will be near to thee."

The story is continued for forty-two sections, and the MS. then ends abruptly.—The above extract will serve as a specimen of the work. It is certainly the oldest poem, of an epic form, which exists in Europe. It is a complete metrical romance.

I cannot but consider the fragment which remains of the Poem on Judith, as another Anglo-Saxon metrical romance. The subject of this poem is taken from the apocrypha, but the Anglo-Saxon poet has borrowed merely the outline of the story. All the circumstances, the descriptions, and the speeches, which he has inserted, are of his own invention. He has, therefore, done what all the romancers did. He has applied the manners and characters of his day to the time of Judith, and thus really made it a metrical romance.

It is curious, from another circumstance. It is a romance written while the old Anglo-Saxon poetry was in fashion, but when it began to improve: for, while it displays the continuity of narration and minuteness of description, of the more cultivated romance, it retains some metaphors, the periphrasis, and the inversions which our stately ancestors so much favoured. It has only laid aside their abrupt transitions and more violent metaphors.

The eight first sections of the poem on Judith, and part of the ninth, are lost. It begins with a part that corresponds with this verse in the Apocrypha:¹⁵

“ And in the fourth day Holofernes made a feast to his own servants only, and called none of the officers to the banquet.”

The Saxon poet expresses this passage thus:—

Understood I then,
Holofernes ordered
wine to be made diligently,
and with all wonders
a splendid feast to prepare.
To this commanded
the Baldor¹⁶ of men,
all the eldest thegns.
They with much haste obeyed:

the shielded warriors came
to the rich king;
the leaders of the people.
This was the fourth day
that Judith,
cunning in thought,
the woman shining like an elf,
first sought him.

The subsequent narration of the Apocrypha is not followed.

¹⁵ Judith, xii. 10.

¹⁶ Baldor was one of the sons of Odin.—

His name is figuratively used to express a chief.

by the poet, but instead of it, from his own invention, he substitutes these circumstances :

CHAP.

II.

Poem on
Judith.

They then to the feast
went to sit,
eager to drink wine;
all his fierce chiefs,
bold, mail-clad warriors!
There were often carried
the deep bowls
behind the benches;
so likewise vessels
and orcas full
to those sitting at supper.
They received him, soon about to die,
the illustrious shield-warriors:
though of this the powerful one
thought not; the fearful
lord of earls.

Then was Holofernes
exhilarated with wine;
in the halls of his guests,
he laughed and shouted;
he roared and dinned;
then might the children of men
afar off hear
how the stern one
stormed and clamoured,
animated and elated with wine.
He admonished amply
that they should bear it well,
to those sitting on the bench.

So was the wicked one
over all the day,
the lord and his men,
drunk with wine,
the stern dispenser of wealth;
till that they swimming lay
over drunk,
all his nobility
as they were death-slain;
their property poured about.
So commanded the Baldor of men
to fill to them sitting at the feast,

till that to the children of men
the dark night approached.
Then commanded he
the man so overpowered,
the blessed virgin
with speed to fetch
to his bed rest,
with bracelets laden,
with rings adorned.
Then quickly hurried
the subjected servants,
as their elder bade them.
The mailed warriors
of the illustrious lord
stepped to the great place.
There they found Judith,
prudent in mind;
and then firmly,
the bannered soldiers
began to lead
the illustrious virgin
to the high tent.
There the powerful one
his rest on the feast night
within was enjoying;
the odious Holofernes.
There was the fair
the golden fly net
about the chief's bed hung,
that the mischief-ful
might look thro',
the Baldor of the soldiers,
on every one
that there within came
of the children of men;
and on him no one
of man kind;
unless the proud one,
any man of his illustrious soldiers,
commanded to come
near him to council.

R R

VOL. II.

BOOK
XII.

Then they to the bed
brought quickly
the prudent woman.
Then went
the fierce minded men
their lord to tell,
that the holy woman was brought
into the chamber of his tent.
Then was the illustrious one
blithe in mind.
The elder of the cities thought
the bright woman
with filth and pollution to stain.
But the Judge of Glory,
the keeper of majesty,
would not suffer it;
but the Lord,
ruler of his nobles,
from this thing restrained.

Then departed
the devil-worshipping lustful one
from the host of men,
mischief-full,
his bed to visit,
where he should
suddenly his blood lose
within one night.

The poet then describes her killing Holofernes:

She took the heathen man
fast by his hair;
she drew him by his limbs
towards her disgracefully;
and the mischieful
odious man
at her pleasure laid;
so as the wretch
she might the easiest well command.

She with the twisted locks
struck the hateful enemy,
meditating hate,
with the red sword,
till she had half cut off his neck;
so that he lay in a swoon,

So, drunken with wine,
the rich one fell
on the middle of his bed,
as he knew no discretion
in the inclosure.

The soldiers stepped
out of the chamber
with much haste;
the wine-ful men
that the perfidious
people-hating tyrant
led to the bed
the nighest way.
Then was the glory-ful
maiden of the Saviour
very mindful
how she the foul elder
might easiest destroy,
before the vicious
stainful one awoke.

The maid of the Creator
with the twisted locks
took then a sharp sword,
hard with scouring,
and from the sheath drew it
with her right limb.

drunk, and mortally wounded.
He was not then dead,
not entirely lifeless;
she struck then earnest,
the woman illustrious in strength,
another time
the heathen hound;
till that his head
rolled forth upon the floor.
The foul one lay without a coffer,
backward his spirit turned
under the abyss,
and there was plunged below,
with sulphur fastened;
for ever afterwards wounded by worms.

Bound in torments,
hard imprisoned,
in hell he burns.
After his course,
he need not hope,
with darkness overwhelmed,
that he may escape

from that mansion of worms ;
but there he shall remain
ever and ever,
without end, henceforth
in that cavern-home,
void of the joys of hope.

Jud. p. 23.

The poet continues to describe Judith's escape to the town of her countrymen. Her reception is thus mentioned :

There were they blithe,
those sitting in the burgh,
after they heard
how the Holy One spake
over the high wall.
The army was rejoiced.
Towards the gates of the fastness
the people went,

men and women together,
in numbers and heaps,
in crowds and hosts.
They thronged, and ran
against the illustrious maid,
from a thousand parts,
old and young.

Here repetition of phrase is the substitute for energy of description.

The poet then gives her speech to the people :

Then the discreet one ordered,
adorned with gold,
to her maidens,
with thoughtful mind,
that army-leader's
head to uncover,
and it on high,
bloody, to shew
to the citizens—
Then spake the noble one
to all the people.
“ Here may we manifestly
stare on the head
of the man illustrious for victory,
of the leader of his people,
of the odious heathen commander ;
of the not living Holofernes,
he that of all men to us
most murders has done,
sore sorrows ;

and more yet
would have augmented them,
but that to him God grants not
a longer life,
that he with injuries
should afflict us.
I from him life took away,
through God's assistance.
Now I to every man
of these citizens
will pray,
of these shield-warriors,
that ye immediately
haste you to fight.
When God, the source of all,
the honour-fast King,
from the East sends
a ray of light,
bear forth your banners ;
with shields for your breasts,

BOOK
XII.

and mail for your hams,
shining helmets,
go among the robbers ;
let their leaders fall,
the devoted chiefs,
by the ruddy sword !
they are your enemies,

destined to death,
and ye shall have their doom,
victory from your great leader,
the mighty Lord !
as he hath signified to you
by my hand."

Jud. p. 24.

The sally which immediately took place, and the consequent battle, is thus described :

Then was the host of the swift
quickly gathered together,
the soldiers to the field ;
the warriors and the nobles
illustrious stepped forth.
They bore the Tufas,
they went to fight
straight onwards :
men under helms
from the holy city,
at the dawn itself.
They dinned shields ;
men roared loudly.
At this rejoiced the lank
wolf in the wood,
and the wan raven,
the fowl greedy of slaughter,
both from the west,
that the sons of men for them
should have thought to prepare
their fill on corpses.
And to them flew in their paths
the active devourer, the eagle,
hoary in his feathers.
The willowed kite,
with his horned beak,
sang the song of Hilda.

The noble warriors proceeded,
they in mail, to the battle,
furnished with shields,
with swelling banners.
They that awhile, before
the reproach of the foreigners,

the taunts of the heathen
endured.
To them what had been hard
at that play of swords,
was in all repaid
on the Assyrians ;
when the Hebrews,
under the banners,
had sallied
on their camps.

They then speedily
let fly forth
showers of arrows,
the serpents of Hilda,
from their horn bows ;
the spears on the ground
hard stormed.
Loud raged
the plunderers of battle ;
they sent their darts
into the throng of the chiefs.
The angry land-owners
acted as men
against the odious race.
Stern-minded, they advanced
with fierce spirits :
they pressed on unsoftly,
with ancient hate,
against the mead-weary foe.
With their hands, the chiefs
tore from their sheaths
the sheer, cross sword,
in its edges tried :

they slew earnestly
the Assyrian combatants.
Pursuing with hate,
none they spared

of the army-folk
of the great kingdom
of the living men,
whom they could overcome.

Jud. 24.

CHAP.
I.

As Cædmon's paraphrase is a poetical narration mixed with many topics of invention and fancy, it has also as great a claim to be considered as a metrical romance, as Milton's Paradise Lost has to be deemed an epic poem. It was published by Junius as the work of the ancient Cædmon, who has been already mentioned. It treats on the first part of the subjects which Bede mentions to have been the topics of the elder Cædmon; but it is presumed by Hickes not to be so ancient as the poet mentioned by Bede. I confess that I am not satisfied that Hickes is right in referring it to any other author than the person to whom Junius ascribes it.

Cædmon's
Paraphrase.

It begins with the fall of angels, and the creation of the world. It proceeds to the history of Adam and Eve; of Cain, and the deluge; of Abraham and of Moses. The actions of Nabuchodonosor and Daniel are subjoined.

In its first topic, "the fall of the angels," it exhibits much of a Miltonic spirit; and if it were clear that our illustrious bard had been familiar with Saxon, we should be induced to think that he owed something to the paraphrase of Cædmon. No one at least can read Cædmon without feeling the idea intruding upon his mind. As the subject is curious, I shall make no apology for very copious extracts from Cædmon, translated as literally as possible:

To us it is much right
that we the Ruler of the firmament,
the Glory-King of Hosts,
with words should praise,
with minds should love.
He is in power abundant,
High Head of all creatures,

Almighty Lord!
There was not to him ever beginning
nor origin made;
nor now end cometh.
Eternal Lord!
But he will be always powerful
over heaven's stools.*

On the Fall
of the Angels.

* I use the term in the original, because such expressions as have any allusion to ancient manners should always be preserved.

BOOK
XII.

in high majesty,
truth-fast and very strenuous,
Ruler of the bosoms of the sky!

Then were they set
wide and ample,
thro' God's power,
for the children of glory,
for the guardians of spirits.
They had joy and splendor,
and their beginning-origin,
the hosts of angels;
bright bliss was their great fruit.

The glory-fast thegns
praised the King:
they said willingly praise
to their Life-Lord;
they obeyed his domination with vir-
tues.

They were very happy;
sins they knew not;
nor to frame crimes:
but they in peace lived
with their Eternal Elder.
Otherwise they began not
to rear in the sky,
except right and truth,
before the Ruler of the angels,
for pride divided them in error.

They would not prolong
council for themselves!
but they from self-love
throw off God's.

They had much pride
that they against the Lord
would divide
the glory-fast place,
the majesty of their hosts,
the wide and bright sky.

To him there grief happened,
envy, and pride;
to that angel's mind
that this ill counsel
began first to frame,
to weave and wake.

Then he words said,
darkened with iniquity,
that lie in the north part
a home and high seat
of heaven's kingdom
would possess.

Then was God angry,
and with the host wrath
that he before esteemed
illustrious and glorious.
He made for those perfidious
an exiled home,
a work of retribution,
Hell's groans and hard hatreds.
Our Lord commanded the punish-
ment-house
for the exiles to abide,
deep, joyless,
the rulers of spirits.

When he it ready knew
with perpetual night foul,
sulphur including,
over it full fire
and extensive cold,
with smoke and red flame,
he commanded them over
the mansion, void of council,
to increase the terror-punishment.

They had provoked accusation;
grim against God gathered together,
to them was grim retribution come.
They said, that they the kingdom
with fierce mind would possess,
and so easily might.

Them the hope deceived,
after the Governor,
the high King of Heaven,
his hands upreared.

He pursued against the crowd;
nor might the void of mind,
vile against their Maker,
enjoy might.

Their loftiness of mind departed,
their pride was diminished.

Then was he angry;
he struck his enemies
with victory and power,
with judgment and virtue,
and took away joy:
peace from his enemies,
and all pleasure:
Illustrious Lord!
and his anger wreaked
on the enemies greatly,
in their own power
deprived of strength.

He had a stern mind,
grimly provoked;
he seized in his wrath
on the limbs of his enemies,
and them in pieces broke,
wrathful in mind.
He deprived of their country
his adversaries,
from the stations of glory
he made and cut off,

our Creator!
the proud race of angels from heav'n;
the faithless host.
The Governor sent
the hated army
on a long journey,
with mourning speech.
To them was glory lost,
their threats broken,
their majesty curtailed,
stained in splendor;
they in exile afterwards
pressed on their black way.
They needed not loud to laugh;
but they in Hell's torments
weary remained, and knew woe,
sad and sorry:
they endured sulphur,
covered with darkness,
a heavy recompense,
because they had begun
to fight against God. Cæd. p. 1, 2.

Cædmon thus describes the creation:

There was not yet then here,
except gloom like a cavern,
any thing made.
But the wide ground
stood deep and dim
for a new lordship,
shapeless and unsuitable.
On this with his eyes he glanced,
the king stern in mind,
and the joyless place beheld.
He saw the dark clouds
perpetually press
black under the sky,
void and waste;
till that this world's creation
thro' the word was done
of the King of Glory.

Here first made
the Eternal Lord,

the Patron of all creatures,
heaven and earth.
He reared the sky,
and this roomy land established
with strong powers,
Almighty Ruler!

The earth was then yet
with grass not green;
with the ocean covered,
perpetually black;
far and wide
the desert ways.

Then was the glory-bright
Spirit of the Warder of heaven
borne over the watery abyss
with great abundance.
The Creator of angels commanded,
the Lord of life!
light to come forth
over the roomy ground.

On the
Creation.

BOOK
XII.

Quickly was fulfilled
the high King's command;
the sacred light came
over the waste
as the Artist ordered.
Then separated
the Governor of victory
over the water-flood
light from darkness,
shade from shine;
he made them both be named,
Lord of life!
Light was first,
thro' the Lord's word,
called day,
creation of bright splendor.

Pleased well the Lord
at the beginning,
the birth of time,
the first day.
He saw the dark shade
black spread itself
over the wide ground,
when time declined
over the oblation-smoke of the earth.
The Creator after separated
from the pure shine,
our Maker,
the first evening.
To him ran at last
a throng of dark clouds.
To these the King himself
gave the name of night:
our Saviour
these separated.
Afterwards, as an inheritance,
the will of the Lord
made and did it
eternal over the earth.

Then came another day,
light after darkness.
The Warder of life then commanded
the greater waters

in the middle to be
a high-like heaven timber.
He divided the watery abyss,
our Governor,
and made them
a fastness of a firmament.
This the Great One raised
up from the earth,
through his own word,
Almighty Lord!

The world was divided
under the high firmament
with holy might;
waters from waters:
from those that yet remain
under the fastness,
the roof of nations.
Then came over the earth,
hasty to advance,
the great third morning.

There were not then yet made
the wide land,
nor the useful ways;
but the earth stood fast,
covered with flood.
The Lord of angels commanded,
thro' his word,
the waters to be together,
that now under the firmament
their course hold
an appointed place.
Then stood willingly
the water under heaven,
as the Holy One commanded.

Far from each other
there was separated
the water from the land.
The Warder of life then beheld
dry regions;
the Keeper of the virtues
wide displayed them.
Then the King of Glory
named the earth.

Cad. 3, 4.

But that part of Cædmon which is the most original product of his own fancy, is his account of Satan's hostility. To us, the "Paradise Lost" of Milton has made this subject peculiarly interesting; and as it will be curious to see how an old Saxon poet has previously treated it, we shall give another copious extract. Some of the touches bring to mind a few of Milton's conceptions. But in Cædmon the finest thoughts are abruptly introduced, and very roughly and imperfectly expressed. In Milton the same ideas are detailed in all the majesty of his diction, and are fully displayed with that vigour of intellect in which he has no superior.

The universal Ruler had
of the angelic race,
through his hand-power,
the holy Lord!
a fortress established.
To them he well trusted
that they his service
would follow,
would do his will.
For this he gave them understanding,
and with his hands made them.
The Holy Lord
had stationed them
so happily.

One he had so
strongly made,
so mighty
in his mind's thought;
he let him rule so much;
the highest in heaven's kingdom;
he had made him
so splendid;
so beautiful
was his fruit in heaven,
which to him came
from the Lord of Hosts;
that he was like
the brilliant stars.

Praise ought he
to have made to his Lord;

VOL. II.

he should have valued dear
his joys in heaven;
he should have thanked his Lord
for the bounty which
in that brightness he shared;
when he was permitted
so long to govern.

But he departed from it
to a worse thing.

He began to upheave strife
against the Governor
of the highest heaven,
that sits on the holy seat.
Dear was he to our Lord;
from whom it could not be hid,
that his angel began
to be over proud.

He raised himself
against his Master;
he sought inflaming speeches;
he began vainglorious words;
he would not serve God;
he said he was his equal
in light and shining;
as white and as bright in hue.
Nor could he find it in his mind
to render obedience
to his God,
to his King.

He thought in himself

S s

that he could have subjects
of more might and skill
than the Holy God.

Spake many words
this angel of pride.

He thought through his own craft
that he could make
a more stronglike seat,
higher in the heavens.

Satan is represented as uttering this soliloquy, which begins with doubting about his enterprise, but ends in a determination to pursue it:

“Why should I contend?
I cannot have
any creature for my superior!
I may with my hands
so many wonders work!
and I must have great power
to acquire a more godlike stool,
higher in the heavens!

Yet why should I
sue for his grace?
or bend to him
with any obedience?
I may be
a god, as he is.
Stand by me,
strong companions!
who will not deceive me
in this contension.
Warriors of hardy mind!

they have chosen me
for their superior;
illustrious soldiers!
with such, indeed,
one may take counsel!
with such folk
may seize a station!
My earnest friends they are,
faithful in the effusions of their mind.
I may, as their leader,
govern in this kingdom.
So I think it not right,
nor need I
flatter any one,
as if to any gods
a god inferior.
I will no longer
remain his subject.”¹⁷

After narrating the consequent anger of the Deity, and the defeat and expulsion of Satan, the poet thus describes his abode in the infernal regions:

The fiend, with all his followers,
fell then out of heaven;
during the space
of three nights and days;
the angels from heaven
into hell; and them all
the Lord turned into devils:
because that they

his deed and word
would not reverence.
For this, into a worse light
under the earth beneath
the Almighty God
placed them, defeated;
in the black hell.
There have they for ever,

¹⁷ i. e. his younger.

for an immeasurable length,
each of the fiends,
fire always renewed.
There comes at last
the eastern wind,
the cold frost
mingling with the fires.
Always fire or arrows,
some hard tortures,
they must have :
it was made for their punishment.
Their world was turned round.
Hell was filled
with execrations.—

They suffer the punishment

Another of Satan's speeches may be cited :

Then spake the overproud king,
that was before
of angels the most shining ;
the whitest in heaven ;
by his Master beloved,
to his Lord endeared ;
till he turned to evil—
Satan said,
with sorrowing speech—

“ Is this the narrow place,
unlike, indeed, to the others
which we before knew,
high in heaven's kingdom,
that my Master puts me in ?
But those we must not have,
by the Omnipotent
deprived of our kingdom.
He hath not done us right,
that he hath filled us
with fire to the bottom
of this hot hell,
and taken away heaven's kingdom.

“ He hath marked that
with mankind
to be settled.
This is to me the greatest sorrow,
that Adam shall,

of their battle against their Ruler ;
the fierce torrents of fire
in the midst of hell :
brands and broad flames ;
so likewise bitter smoke,
vapour, and darkness.—

They were all fallen
to the bottom of that fire
in the hot hell,
thro' their folly and pride.
Sought they other land,
it was all void of light,
and full of fire,
a great journey of fire.—

he that was made of earth,
my stronglike stool possess.
He is to be thus happy,
while we suffer punishment ;
misery in this hell !
Oh that I had free
the power of my hands,
and might for a time
be out ;
for one winter's space,
I and my army !
but iron bonds
lay around me !
knots of chains press me down !
I am kingdomless !
hell's fetters
hold me so hard,
so fast encompass me !
Here are mighty flames
above and beneath ;
I never saw
a more hateful landscape.
This fire never languishes ;
hot over hell,
encircling rings,
biting manacles,
forbid my course.

BOOK
XII.

My army is taken from me,
my feet are bound,
my hands imprisoned!—
Thus hath God confined me.
Hence I perceive
that he knows my mind.
The Lord of Hosts
likewise knows
that Adam should from us
suffer evil
about heaven's kingdom,
if I had the power of my hands.—
He hath now marked out

a middle region;
where he hath made man
after his likeness.
From him he will
again settle
the kingdom of heaven
with pure souls.
We should to this end
diligently labour,
that we on Adam,
if we ever may,
and on his offspring,
work some revenge.”

After explaining his plan of seducing Adam to disobedience, he adds,

“If, when king,
to any of my thegns
I formerly gave treasures;
when we in that good kingdom
sat happy,
and had the power of our thrones;
when he to me,
in that beloved time,
could give no recompense,
to repay my favour;
let him now again,
some one of my thegns,
become my helper,
that he may escape hence
thro' these barriers;
that he with wings may fly,
may wind into the sky,
to where Adam and Eve
stand created on the earth.—

“If any of you
could by any means change them,
that they God's word,
his command, would neglect,
soon they to him
would become odious.
If Adam break thro'
his obedience,
then with them would the Supreme
become enraged,
and award their punishment.

“Strive ye all for this,
how ye may deceive them!
Then shall I repose softly,
even in these bonds.
To him that succeeds
a reward shall be ready—
I will set him
near to myself.”

Cædm. 6—11.

From these poems, of Beowulf, Judith, and Cædmon, it is clear that the Anglo-Saxons had begun to compose long narrative poems, full of fancy, which seem to be justly entitled to the name of metrical romances, unless the higher term of

heroic poem be more appropriate. But if this be admitted, from whence did they originate?

CHAP.

I.

The epic poems of antiquity seem to me to be the legitimate parents of all the narrative poetry of Europe, and the progress of the descent may be sufficiently traced.

The Romans derived this species of composition from the Greeks, and cultivated it with varying success. Their epic poetry established a taste for narrative poems wherever their language spread. This appears from the poems of this sort which the writers, of the various countries of Europe under their influence, attempted to compose.

In the fourth century, we have a narrative poem, in Latin hexameter verse, written by VICTORINUS, an African rhetorician, on the slaughter of the Maccabees. It is not much above four hundred lines in length.¹⁸

In the same century, JUVENCUS, a Spaniard, wrote a narrative poem, in hexameter verse, on the history of Christ, which contains four books, and above three thousand lines. The narration is carefully carried on, but the poetry is of an humble cast.¹⁹

One of the most remarkable poems of AURELIUS PRUDENTIUS, a Spaniard of consular dignity, is the Psychomachia. This is an allegorical poem, in eight books, on the virtues and vices of the mind, in a sort of heroic narration. It is partly the same subject which our Spenser has combined with a chivalric story. In Prudentius, every virtue and every vice come out as persons, armed or dressed appropriately to their different qualities, and harangue and fight. It consists of one thousand and twenty-two hexameter lines.²⁰

In the fifth century, SEDULIUS, an Irishman, flourished. He went to France, Italy, and Asia; and on his return from Achaia, he settled at Rome. He has written a narrative poem on the miracles of Christ, which he calls his Paschale Opus.

¹⁸ Bib. Mag. t. viii. p. 625—628.

¹⁹ Ib. 629—657.

²⁰ Ib. 463—471.

It is in five books, containing about two thousand hexameter lines. It is almost wholly narration and description, seldom enlivened by dialogue; but his style of verse is much superior to that of the preceding authors, and has somewhat of the air of Statius.²¹

CLAUDIUS MARIUS VICTOR, a rhetorician of Marseilles, lived in the same century. His poetical commentary on Genesis is a narrative poem on the creation, the fall of man, and the subsequent history, including that of Abraham. In the part of his poem which concerns "Paradise Lost," the most original incidents are these: while Adam is addressing the Deity in a long penitential speech, they see the serpent gliding before them. Eve counsels his destruction. She immediately pursues him with stones, in which Adam joins, till one of them, striking a flint, elicits a spark, which instantly kindles a flame and sets the woods in a blaze. The unexpected sight of this new element of fire terrifies our parents into a hasty flight. The poem contains about eighteen hundred lines.²²

The poems of SIDONIUS on the emperor, his friend, contain a sort of heroic fable. In the panegyric on Avitus, the emperor speaks, as do others; and Jupiter likewise harangues.²³ The life of St. Martin, by PAULINUS, a senator of Aquitain, afterwards a bishop, in hexameter verse, must be also considered as a narrative poem of considerable length. It is in six books, and contains about three thousand seven hundred hexameter lines. Though it abounds with fiction, it is very dull.²⁴

In the sixth century, ALCIMUS AVITUS, the archbishop of Vienne, composed a narrative poem on the Jewish history, from the creation to Exodus, in five books, comprising above two thousand lines. The first book is on the creation, the second on the fall, the third on the expulsion from Paradise,

²¹ Bib. Mag. t. viii. p. 658—678.

²² Ib. 580—595.

²³ Sid. Apoll.

²⁴ Bib. Mag. t. viii. p. 852—882.

the fifth on the flood, and the sixth on the passage of the Red Sea. It is more remarkable for its antiquity than for its poetry. But it must be ranked much above the lowest in the list of the leaden goddess.²⁵

ARATOR, a Roman sub-deacon, in the same century, wrote a narrative poem on the apostolic history, in two books, and about two thousand four hundred lines. It is more entitled to be enumerated than read. Its purpose is much better than its versification.²⁶

FORTUNATUS, a most loquacious poet, bishop of Poitou, devoted four books, and about two thousand lines, to a narrative poem of the life of St. Martin. As it is full of his miracles, it is full of invention; but as the poets whom he enumerates, in his proemium, as his models, are those whom we have just mentioned, it may be expected that the pupil has not obscured his tutors either by his taste or his genius.²⁷

In the seventh century, we have the heroic poem of PETRUS APOLLONIUS, an Italian, on the destruction of Jerusalem, in above two thousand hexameters. It obviously emulates the style and the manner of the best models. It attempts epic machinery and dramatic effect, though the success of the effort is not always equal to its ambition. One part of its machinery is, the sending the angel Raphael to the Tartarian abodes, to command one of the demons to go and persuade the Jewish leaders to revolt from the Romans, that they may bring their punishment on themselves.²⁸

In the eighth century, we have BEDE's Life of Saint Cuthbert, of which a specimen will be given in the chapter on the Latin poetry of the Anglo-Saxons. It is, indeed, a metrical romance in Latin verse. The incidents are fanciful tales of Cuthbert's miraculous adventures. They are narrated in a dramatic form, as the specimen hereafter given will shew. It consists of 979 lines.

²⁵ Bib. Mag. t. viii. p. 596—618.

²⁶ Ib. 682—700.

²⁷ Bib. Mag. t. viii. 753—772.

²⁸ Ib. 731—752.

All these poems are obviously the offspring of the Roman Epopeas; and shew, that by them the taste for narrative poetry was excited in France, in Spain, Italy, and Britain. From the epic poems of antiquity, and their imitations, the Anglo-Saxons, as well as the Franks, and the Goths in Spain, learnt the art of constructing and carrying on an epic fable. The first imitations were in Latin, by those who knew the language and loved its poetry. But that men arose who cultivated poetry in their native tongue, as well as in the Latin language, we learn from the example of Aldhelm. His Latin poetry will be noticed in the next chapter; and we have already remarked, from the information of Alfred, that he took great pains to compose poems for the instruction of his countrymen in their vernacular tongue.

The first narrative poems were probably composed by the ecclesiastics. The poems of Cædmon and on Judith are obviously religious; and many parts of the composition on Beowulf have a religious air. Such men, from their learning, would be best skilled in the art of narration; and from them it probably descended to the Scop, or professional poet.

That the ecclesiastics of those ages greatly cultivated the art of narrative invention, and were successful in their efforts, we see from their legends. The miraculous stories in Gregory's dialogues, in Bede's history, and in other writers of that time, are in fact so many fanciful tales, much more poetical in their invention and narration than any of those works which then passed as poetry.

That the legends and lives of Saints were translated from Latin into Anglo-Saxon, we know to be a fact. Alfred translated Gregory's dialogues, which are nothing but legends or tales of the miraculous actions of the Italian saints, but so numerous as to fill 116 folio pages. It is as complete a specimen of fictitious narration as any book of fairy tales which has been published. Every nation of Europe, after the fall of the Roman empire, abounded with such narratives of super-

natural agency; and therefore we must consider the monks as the great inventors of narrative fiction. So numerous were their creations, that the lives of the saints, which have been collected and published, amount, in the last edition, to nearly a hundred thick folio volumes, written chiefly in the early and middle ages of Europe, and all abounding with tales of supernatural agency. Some display very striking imagery and rich invention, others are dull. The ancient lives of the Irish saints are so extravagant in their inventions, that the editors, who believe the truth of all the others, have felt it decorous to caution the reader that the fancy of these biographers has been too ardent, and their credulity too indiscriminate.

The lives of the saints which still exist in the Anglo-Saxon language, shew that they were diffused among the people; and the fact, that some ecclesiastics, like Aldhelm, chose to compose poems in their native language, to improve the people, makes it probable that many of the legends were put into Anglo-Saxon poetry.

For these reasons, we may consider the Roman epic poems as the parents of the narrative poetry of modern Europe, and the ecclesiastics who had a poetical taste, as the first composers of narrative poems in our vernacular languages, and more particularly in the Anglo-Saxon.

Of their lyric, or miscellaneous poetry, one of the oldest and best specimens is Alfred's poetical translation of the poetry in Boethius. The language is allowed to be elegant and appropriate, and worthy of the royal taste. We will select a few passages.

Their Lyric
Poetry.

Oh! in how gloomy
and how bottomless
a well, laboureth
the darkened mind,
when it the strong
storms beat
of the world's business,
Then it contending,

his own light
again loseth,
and with woe
forgets the
eternal joy.
Distressed with sorrows
of this world,
the darkness then rushes on.²⁹

²⁹ Alfred's Boethius, published by Rawlinson, p. 153.

BOOK
XII.

The following is Alfred's paraphrastic address to the Deity:

Oh thou Creator

of the pure stars
of heaven and earth !
thou on high seat
ever reignest.

And thou all the swift
heaven turnest round :

and thro' thy
holy might
the stars compellest
that they obey thee.

* * * *

Oh ! which on earth
of all creatures
obey thy commandments,

as some

do in heaven,
with mind and power ?
But man alone,
he against thy will
worketh oft'nest.

Oh ! thou eternal,
and thou Almighty,
of all creatures
Maker and Governor !

pardon thy miserable
offspring of earth,
mankind,
thro' the power of thy might.

His complaint of the prevalence of evil is thus urged :

Why, thou eternal God,
wouldest thou ever

that fortune
at will

should turn
to evil men

always so powerful ?

She full oft

injures the guiltless.

Evil men sit

over the earth's kingdoms

on high seats ;

they trample the holy
under their feet.

To men it is unknown
why fortune

should so revolve woe.—

Thus are hidden

here in the world,

amid many cities,

the bright arts.

In all times, the unrighteous
have in affliction

those that are

wiser in right,

worthier of rule.

False cunning is

a long while

concealed by deceit.

Now in the world here,

false oaths

hurt not men.

If thou now, governing,

wilt not steer fortune,

but at her self-will

lettest her go ;

then I know

that thee will

worldly men doubt,

over the earth's regions,

except a few only.

He closes the passage with this address :

Oh ! my Lord,

thou that all overlookest

of the world's creatures,

look now on mankind

with mild eyes;
now they here, in many
of the world's waves,

struggle and labour:
miserable earth-citizens!
pity them now!³⁰

There is an effort at description not unsuccessful in these lines:

Then Wisdom again
unlocked her word-treasure.
She sang true saying,
and thus herself said:

"When the sun
clearest shines
serenest in heaven,
speedily will be darkened
all over the earth
the other stars.

For, this their
brightness cannot be
set aught

against the sun's light.

When mild blows

the south and west

wind, under heaven,

then quickly increase
the blossoms of the fields,
that they may rejoice.

But the dark storm,
when he cometh strong

from north and east,
he taketh away speedily
the blossoms of the rose;

and also the wide sea

the northern tempest

drives with vehemence,

that it be strong excited,

and lashes the shores.

All that is on earth,

even the fast-built

works in the world

will not remain for ever.³¹

We will add two short comparisons of our venerable king:

So oft the mild sea
with south wind
as grey glass clear
becomes grimly troubled,
then the great waves mingle,
the sea whales rear themselves;
rough is then that
which before was glad to look at.³²

* * * * *

So oft a spring
bursts from the hoary cliffs,
cold and clear,

and diffusely flows on,
it runneth along the earth;
a great mountain-stone falleth,
and in the midst of it
lies trundled
from the mountain;
it then into two streams
is divided;

the pure lake
becomes troubled and turbid,
and the brook is changed
from its right course.³³

It will be sufficient to add to the already copious specimens of the Anglo-Saxon poetry, the following Ode, which is appended to the menology. It is a very singular and curious composition:

³⁰ Alfred's Boethius, p. 154.

³¹ Ibid 156.

³² Ibid. 155.

³³ Ibid.

BOOK
XII.

The King shall hold the Kingdom;
castles shall be seen afar,
the work of the mind of giants,
that are on this earth;
the wonderful work of wallstones.

The wind is the swiftest in the sky;
thunder is the loudest of noises;
great is the majesty of Christ;
fortune is the strongest;
winter is the coldest;
spring has most hoar-frost;
he is the longest cold:
summer sun is most beautiful;
the air is then hottest;
fierce harvest is the happiest:
it bringeth to men
the tribute-fruits,
that to them God sendeth.
Truth is most deceiving;
treasures are most precious,
gold, to every man;
and age is the wisest,
sagacious from ancient days,
from having before endured much.
Woe is a wonderful burthen;
clouds roam about;
the young Etheling
good companions shall
animate to war,
and to the giving of bracelets.

Strength in the earl,
the sword with the helm
shall abide battle.
The hawk in the sea-cliff
shall live wild.
the wolf in the grove;
the eagle in the meadow;
the boar in the wood
powerful with the strength of his tusk.

The good man in his country
will do justice.

With the dart in the hand,
the spear adorned with gold,

the gem in the ring
will stand pendent and curved.

The stream in the waves
will make a great flood.

The mast in the keel
will groan with the sail yards.

The sword will be in the bosom,
the lordly iron:
the dragon will rest on his hillock,
crafty, proud with his ornaments;
the fish will in the water
produce a progeny.

The king will in the hall
distribute bracelets.

The bear will be on the heath
old and terrible.

The water will from the hill
bring down the grey earth.

The army will be together
strong with the bravest.

Fidelity in the earl;
wisdom in man!

The woods will on the ground
blow with fruit;

the mountains in the earth
will stand green.

God will be in heaven
the judge of deeds.

The door will be to the hall
the mouth of the roomy mansion.

The round will be on the shield,
the fast fortress of the fingers.

Fowl aloft
will sport in the air;
salmon in the whirlpool
will roll with the skate;
the shower in the heavens,
mingled with wind,
will come on the world.

The thief will go out
in dark weather.

The Thyrs³⁴ will remain in the fen,
alone in the land.

³⁴ A Thyrs was among the Northerns a giant, or wild mountain savage, a sort of evil-being somewhat supernatural.

A maiden with secret arts,
a woman, her friend will seek,
if she cannot
in public grow up
so that men may buy her with brace-
lets.

The salt ocean will rage ;
the clouds of the supreme Ruler,
and the water floods
about every land,
will flow in expansive streams.

Cattle in the earth
will multiply and be reared.
Stars will in the heavens
shine brightly,
as their Creator commanded them.

God against evil ;
youth against age ;
life against death ;
light against darkness ;
army against army ;
enemy against enemies ;
hate against hate ;
shall every where contend :
sin will steal on.

Always will the prudent strive
about this world's labour
to hang the thief ;
and compensate the more honest
for the crime committed
against mankind.

The Creator alone knows
whither the soul
shall afterwards roam,
and all the spirits
that depart in God.

After their death-day
they will abide their judgment
in their father's bosom.

Their future condition
is hidden and secret.

God alone knows it,
the preserving father !

None again return
hither to our houses,
that any truth
may reveal to man,
about the nature of the Creator,
or the people's habitations of glory
which he himself inhabits.³⁵

³⁵ See the Saxon ode in Hickes's Grammat. Anglo-Sax. p. 207, 208.

C H A P. II.

*On the Anglo-Saxon Versification.*BOOK
XII.

THE best Saxon scholars have confessed that the versification of the vernacular poetry of our ancestors was modelled by rules which we have not explored. Our ignorance of the principles of their verse still continues; and therefore all that can be done on this topic is to give some specimens of the different forms which have survived to us.

In Alfred's Boethius, part of the specimens that we have translated in the last chapter stand thus:

Eala thu scippend
Scirra tungla
Hefones and eorthan
Thu on heah setle
Ecum ricsast
And thu ealne hræthe
Hefon ymbhwearfest
And thurh thine
Halige miht
Tunglu genedest,
Thæt he the to herath

Swylce seo sunne
Sweartra nihta
Thiostro adwæsceth
Thurh thine meht
Blacun leoht
Beorhte steorran
Mona gemetgath
Thurh thinra meahta sped
Hwilum eac tha sunnan
Sines bereafath
Beorhtan leohtes

The quotation from Alfred ends,

Eala min dryhten
Thu the ealle ofersihst
Worulde gesceafta
Wlit nu on moncyn
Mildum eagum

Nu hi on monegum her
Worulde ythum
Wynnath and swincath
Ara him nu tha.

Boeth. 154.

The Saxon of another of the quotations from Boethius is,

Swa oft smylte sæ
Sutherne wind
Græge glas hluthre
Grimme gedrefeth
Thonne hie gemengath

Micla ysta
Onhrerath hron mere
Hrioth bith thonne
Seo the ær gladu
On siene wæs

Swa oft æspringe uta wealleth
Of clife harum
Col and hluttur
And gereclice rihte floweth
Irneth with his eardes

Oth him on innan
Felth mantes mægen stan
And him on middan
Gelegith atrendlod.

Boeth. 155.

The little poem which was cited from the Saxon Chronicle is the following:

Tha wearth eac adræfed
Deormod hæleth
Oslac of earde
Ofa ytha gewealc
Ofer ganotes bæth

Gamol feax hæleth
Wis and word snottor
Ofer wætera gethring
Ofer hwæles æthel
Hama bereafod.

The next lines may be cited, because of their rhiming tendency:

That wearth ætywed
Uppe on roderum
Steorra ou stathole
Thohe stith færhthe
Hæleth hige gleawe

Hatath wide
Cometa be naman
Cræft gleawe men
Wise sothboran.¹

The versification of Cædmon's paraphrase is of a similar species. It begins

Us is riht micel
Thæt we rodera weard
Wereda wuldor cyning
Wordum herigen
Modum lufien.

He is mægna sped
Heafod calra
Heah gesceafta
Frea Ælmightig.

Cæd. p. 1.

The account of the creation begins thus:²

Ne wæs her tha giet
Nymthe heolster sceado
Wiht geworden
Ac thes wida grund

Stod deop and dim
Drihtne fremde
Idel and unnyt
On thone eagum wlat

¹ Sax. Chr. 123.

² In all these Saxon quotations the want of the articles is very perceptible. I have been obliged to add them in all my translations, to make them intelligible.

BOOK
XII.

Stith frith cining
And tha stowe beheold
Dreamalease
Geseah deorc geweorc
Semian sinnihte
Sweart under roderum
Wonne and weste
Oth tha theos woruld gesceaft
Thurh word gewearth
Wuldor cynninges
Her ærest gesceop
Ece drihten
Helm eall wihta

Heofon and eorþan
Rodor arærde
And this rume land
Gestathelode
Strangum mihtum
Frea Ælmihtig.
Folde wæs tha gyta
Græs ungrene
Garsecg theahte
Sweart synnihte
Side and wide
Wonne wegas.

In Judith the versification is of this species, which is taken from the description of the battle:

Tha wearth snellra werod
Snude gegearwod
Cenra to campe
Stopon cynerofe
Secgas and gesithas
Bæron thufas
Forn to gefeohte
Forth on gerihte
Hæleth under helmum
Of thære haligan byrig
On thæt dægred
Sylf dynedan scildas
Hlude hluinnon
Thæs se hlanca gefeah

Wulf in walde
And se wanna hrefu
Wæl gifre fugel
Westan begen
Tha him tha theod guman
Thohton tilian
Fylle on fægum
Ac him fleah on last
Earn ætes georn
Urig fethera
Salowig pada
Sang hilde leoth
Hyrded nebba.

Jud. p. 24.

Rhime seems to have been occasionally in the contemplation of the author of this poem. The first eight lines of the above quotation rhyme, and towards the end of the description there occur together,

Yrre landbuende
Lathum cynne
Stopon styrmode

Sterced ferhthe
Wrehton unsofte ;

and many rhiming lines may be traced in the poem. But it is clear that the rhyme used was but an occasional addition,

and quite distinct from the general metre or rhythm of the poem. CHAP.
II.

The following extracts will shew the style of the poem on Beowulf:

Tha wæs on burgum
Beowulf Scyldinga
Leof leod cyning
Longe thrage folcum
Gefræt gefæder
Ellor hwearf
Aldor of earde
Oth tha him eft on woc
Heah healfdene hold.

Thenden lifde gamol
And Guthreow
Glæde scyldingas
Thæm feower bearn
Forth gerimed
In woruld wocun
Weoroda ræswa
Heorogar and Hrothgar
And Halgatil.—

The description of Beowulf's sailing and landing is thus given:

Cwæth he Guthcyning
Ofer swan rade
Secean wolde
Mærne theoden
Tha him wæs manna thearf
Thone sithfæt him
Snotere ceorlas
Lyt hwon logon
Thæm the him leof wære.—

Secg wisade
Lagu cræftig mon
Land gemyrcu
Fyrst forth gewat flota
Wæs on ythum
Bat under beorge
Beornas gearwe
On stefn stigon streamas.—

Gewat tha ofer wæg holm
Winde gefysed
Flota fann heals
Fugle gelicost
Oth tha ymb an tid
Othres dogores
Wunden stefna
Gewada hæfde.

Tha tha lithende
Land gesawon
Brim clifu blican
Beorgas steape
Side sæ næssas.—
Thanon up hrathe
Wedera leode
On wang stigon
Sæ wudu sældon
Syrcon hrysedon
Guth gewædo
Gode thancedon
Thæs the him ythlade
Eathe wurdon

Tha of wealle geseah
Weard scyldinga
Se the holm clifre
Healdan scolde
Beran ofer bolcan
Beorhte randas
Fyrd searu
Fuslicu hine fyr pit bræc
Mod gehyddum
Hwæt tha men wæron.

Beowulf's answer to the thegn's inquiries about him begins thus:

Him se yldesta answarode
Weordes wisa
Worde hord onleac
Wey synt gum cynnes
Geata leode
And Higelaces hearth geneatas
Wæs min fæder

Folcum gecythed
Æthele ordfruma
Egtheow haten
Gebad wintra worn
Or he on wæg hwurfe
Gamol of geardum.

The Anglo-Saxon versification possesses occasional rhyme and occasional alliteration, and sometimes the alliteration peculiar to the Welsh poetry. But none of these form its constituent character. Mr. Tyrhwit and Mr. Ellis are also right in asserting that it does not depend upon "a fixed and determinate number of syllables, nor on that marked attention to their quantity which Hickee supposed to have constituted the distinction between verse and prose."³

It appears to me that the only rule of the Saxon versification which we can now discover is, that the words are placed in that peculiar rhythm or cadence which is observable in all the preceding extracts. This rhythm will be felt by every one who reads the following lines:

Thohton tilian
Fylle on fægum—
Urig fæthera
Salowig pada—
Wordum herigen

Modum lufien—
Heafod ealra
Heah gesceafta
Frea Ælmihtig.—

To produce this rhythm seems to have been the perfection of their versification. But, happily for the strength of their poetry, they extended their rhythm sometimes into a more dignified cadence, as

Wereda wuldor cyning—
Ymthe heolster sceado—
Thurh thinra meahta sped.—

³ Ellis's Specimens of the early English Poets, Pref.

When their words would not fall easily into the desired rhythm, they were satisfied with an approach to it, and with this mixture of regular and irregular cadence all their poetry seems to have been composed.

By this rhythm, by their inversions of phrase, by their transitions, by their omissions of particles, by their contractions of phrase, and, above all, by their metaphors and perpetual periphrasis, their poetry seems to have been distinguished.

CHAP.
II.

BOOK
XII.

Origin of
Classical
Poetry.

CHAP. III.

*Their Latin Poetry.*BOOK
XII.Origin of
their Latin
Poetry.

THE Latin poetry of the Anglo-Saxons originated from the Roman poetry, and was composed according to the rules of Roman prosody. Its authors were all ecclesiastics who had studied the classical writers and their imitators; and who followed, as nearly as their genius would permit them, the style and manner of classical composition. Sometimes they added a few absurd peculiarities, dictated by bad taste, and sometimes they used rhyme. But in general the regular hexameter verse was the predominant characteristic of their poems.

The origin of their Latin poetry may be therefore easily explained. With the works of the classical writers we are all acquainted. As the Roman empire declined, the genius of poetry disappeared. Claudian emitted some of its departing rays. But after his death it would have sunk for ever in the utter night of the Gothic irruption, if the Christian clergy had not afforded it an asylum in their monasteries, and devoted their leisure to read and to imitate it.

The Romans had diffused their language as their conquests and colonies spread; but it would have also perished when the Gothic irruptions destroyed their empire, if the Christian hierarchy had not preserved it. The barbarians who raised new sovereignties in the imperial provinces were successively converted to Christianity; and as the new faith chiefly emanated from Rome, one religious system pervaded the western part of Europe. The public worship was every where performed in Latin. All the dignified clergy and many others were perpetually visiting Rome. The most accessible and popular works of the fathers of the church were in the Latin language.

And this was the only tongue in which the ecclesiastics of Germany, France, Britain, Spain, Ireland, and Italy could compose or correspond in to be understood by each other. Hence every ecclesiastic in every part of Europe, who aspired to any intellectual cultivation or distinction, was obliged to learn the Latin language, and to write in it. From this circumstance, they nourished a necessary attachment to the Latin authors; and thus the Latin language and the classical writers were preserved by the Christian clergy from that destruction which has entirely swept from us both the language and the writings of Phœnicia, Carthage, Babylon, and Egypt.

Many of the clergy wrote homilies, or disputations treatises; some aspired to history, and some were led to cultivate poetry. In the fourth century, Victorinus, Juvencus, and Prudentius, distinguished themselves by poems in Latin verse on devotional subjects. In the fifth century, Sedulius, Dracontius, and Sidonius, with others, cultivated Latin poetry. In the next age appeared Alcimus, Arator, Columbanus, and the prolific Venantius Fortunatus. Every subsequent century enumerated many ecclesiastical poets, who all alike fashioned both their genius and their works from the classical models, or their imitators. They chose, indeed, subjects more suited to their sacred profession; but they strove, according to their best abilities, to give their religious efforts all the style and the measures of the standard poetry of ancient Rome.

The Anglo-Saxons who wrote Latin poetry drank from the same Heliconian spring, and used the same prosody; and of course their Latin poetry originated from the Latin poetry of the ecclesiastics who had preceded them, and their classical models.

But though the prosody of the classical poetry furnished these writers with their metres, yet as they were still in a rude and uncultivated age, their taste was too unformed and irregular to keep to the chaste style of the Augustan bards. They

undervalued the excellence to which they were familiar, and sometimes they strove to improve it by beauties of their own, beauties, however, only perceptible to the eye or the ear of a barbarian.

Some of their grotesque ornaments are mentioned in the fifth century by Sidonius. He notices some verses which were so composed as to admit of being read either backward or forward. Thus:

Roma tibi subito motibus ibit amor.

and

Sole medere pede, ede perede melos.¹

He has also given to us a specimen of another fantastic effort in two verses, of which he asks his friend to admire the disposition of the syllables:

Præcipiti modo quod decurrit tramite flumen,
Tempore consumptum jam cito deficiet.

These, if read backward, will give

Deficiet cito jam consumptum tempore flumen,
Tramite decurrit quod modo præcipiti!

The poem of Proba Falconia, a poetess of the fourth century, was also constructed very whimsically. Her subjects were, the history of the creation, the deluge, and Christ. She narrates these histories in centos from Virgil, who knew nothing about them. She has so curiously selected above 700 of his lines, and so placed them, that, with the aid of titles to the different portions, the principal events of these scripture histories are described in the words of the Mantuan bard.²

Aldhelm's
Latin Poetry:

Our Anglo-Saxons display occasional exertions of the same depraved taste in their Latin poetry; of which the most ancient that has descended to us consists of the compositions of Aldhelm, who died in 809; his life will be given in an

¹ Sid. Ap. l. ix. ep. 14.

² Bib. Mag. t. viii. p. 708—716.

article of their literature. His verses are preferable to his prose, because the pompous style which he delighted to use is more congenial with the diction of poetry. His poetical works which remain are these: De Laude Virginum, De Octo principalibus Vitiis, and Ænigmata.

CHAP.
III.

Towards the close of his prose treatise on Virginité, he stated, that he should write on the same subject in poetry. His preface to the poem is an acrostic address to the abbess Maxima, in hexameter verse. It consists of thirty-eight lines, so fantastically written that each line begins and ends with the successive letters of the words of the first line; and thus the first and last lines, and the initial and final letters of each line consist of the same words. In the last line the words occur backwards. The final letters are to be read upwards.

his De Laude
Virginum.

METRICA TIRONES NUNC PROMANT CARMINA CASTO S

E t laudem capiat quadrato carmine virg O

T rinus in arce Deus, qui pollens secla creavi T

R egnator mundi, regnans in sedibus alti S

I ndigno conferre mihi dignetur in æthr A

C um sanctis requiem, quos laudo versibus isti C

A rbiter altithronus qui servat sceptrum supern A

T radidit his cœli per ludum scandere lime N

I nter sanctorum cuneos qui laude perenn I

R ite glorificant moderantem regna tonante M

O mnitenens Dominus, mundi formator et aucto R

N obis pauperibus confer suffragia cert A

E t ne concedas trudos hostibus istin C

S ed magis exiguos defendens dextera tanga T

N e prædo pallax cœlorum claudere lime N

V el sanctos valeat noxarum fallere scen A

N e fur strophosus foveam detrudat in atra M

C onditor a summo quos Christus servat Olymp O

P astor ovile tuens ne possit tabula rapto R

R egales vastans caulas bis dicere pup pu P

O mnia sed custos defendat ovilia jam nun C

M axima præcipuum quæ gestat numine nome N

A ddere præsidium mater dignare precat U

N am tu perpetuum promisisti lumine lume N

T itan quem clamant sacro spiramine vate S

Cujus per mundum jubar alto splendet ab ax E

Atque polos pariter replet vibramine fulmen N
 Rex regum et princeps populorum dictus ab æv O
 Magnus de magno, de rerum regmine recto R
 Illum nec mare nec possunt cingere coel I
 Nec mare navigerum spumoso gurgite valla T
 Aut zonæ mundi que stipant æthera cels A
 Clarorum vitam qui castis moribus isti C
 Auxiliante Deo vernabant flore perenn I
 Sanctis aggrediar studiis dicere paupe R
 Tanta tamen digne si pauper præmia proda T
 Omnia cum nullus verbis explanat apert E
 SOTSAC ANIMRAC TNAMORP CNUN SENORIT ACIRTE M.³

Aldhelm calls this quadratum carmen, a square verse. He was not the inventor of these idle fopperies of versification. Fortunatus and others had preceded Aldhelm in this tasteless path, in which authors endeavour to surprize us, not by the genius they display, but by the difficulties which they overcome.

The poem is not divided into books or chapters. It consists of 2,443 hexameter lines, the last eight of which are rhimed; the four first alternately, the others in couplets. We subjoin them:

Quis prius in spira morsum glomeravit inertem
 Idcirco cursim festinat credere Christo
 Agnoscens propriam tanta virtute salutem
 Insuper et meritum cumulavit sanguinis ostro,
 Præmia sumpturus cum cœli cœtibus almis.
 Candida post sequitur cum binis martyra sertis,
 Integritas nitidam, nec non et passio rubram
 Plumabant pariter macta virtute coronam.⁴

The first twenty-two lines of the poem are an invocation to the Deity. The translations of the passages which we select, as specimens of his powers, are made as literal as possible.

³ Maxima Bib. Vet. Patr. t. xiii. p. 3.

⁴ Ib. p. 19.

Almighty Father! Sovereign of the world!
Whose word the lucid summits of the sky
With stars adorn'd, and earth's foundations fram'd;
Who ting'd with purple flowers the lonely heath;
And check'd the wandering billows of the main,
Lest o'er the lands the foamy waves should rage
(Hence rocks abrupt the swelling surge controul):
Thou cheer'st the cultured field with gelid streams;
And with thy dropping clouds the corn distends:
Thine orbs of light expel night's dreary shade;
Titan the day, and Cynthia tends the night:
From thee what tribes the fields of ocean roam,
What scaly hosts in the blue whirlpools play!
The limpid air with fluttering crowds abounds,
Whose prattling beaks their joyful carols pour,
And hail thee as the universal Lord:
Give, Merciful! thine aid, that I may learn
To sing the glorious actions of thy saints.⁵

* * * * *

I seek not rustic verse, nor court the Nine,⁶
Nor from Castalia's nymphs their metres ask,
Said erst to guard the Heliconian hill.

⁵ Omnipotens genitor mundum ditione gubernans

Lucida stelligeri qui conditis culmina cœli,
Nec non telluris formas fundamina verbo:
Pallida purpureo pingis qui flore vireta:
Sic quoque fluctivagi refrenas cœrula ponti,
Mergere ne valeant terrarum littora lymphis,
Sed tumidos frangunt fluctus obstacula rupis:
Arvorum gelido qui cultus fonte rigabis,
Et segetum glumas nimborum imbribus auges,
Qui latebras mundi geminato sidere demis;
Nempe diem Titan et noctem Cynthia comit.
Piscibus æquoreos qui campos pinguibus ornas,
Squamigeras formans in glauco gurgite turmas
Limpida præpetibus, sic complex aera catervis,
Garrula quæ rostris resonantes cantica pipant
Atque creatorem diversa voce fatentur.
Da prius auxilium, clemens, ut carmina possim
Indita Sanctorum modulari gesta priorum.

Maxima Bib. Vet. Patr. t. xiii. p. 3.

⁶ Non rogo ruricolæ versus, et commata musas
Non peto Castalidas metrorum cantica nymphas
Quas dicunt Heliconæ jugum servare supernum,

Nor, Phebus! need I thy loquacious tongue,
Whom fair Latona bore on Delos' isle—
I'll rather press the thunderer with my prayers,
Who gave to man the lessons of his word;
Words from the Word I ask, whom David sang,
Sole offspring of the Father; and by whom
Th' Almighty Sire created all we know;
So may their gracious inspiration deign
To aid their feeble servant in his lay.

He opens his subject by telling us that there are three descriptions of persons to whom the praise of chastity belongs; the married who live virtuously; the married who live as if they were single; and they who keep in the virgin state. After above an hundred lines in praise of virginity, he proceeds to describe forty-five characters who distinguished the state which he prefers; and this biographical panegyric forms the substance of his poem. Most of his applauded personages are only known in the calendars of the Romish church. Some of his images, common-places, and examples, shall be quoted.

Amid his wild and diffuse panegyric on virginity, the following images occur:

Now let my verses cull the rarest flowers,
And weave the virgin crowns which grace the good;
What can more charm celestials in our conflict,
Than the pure breast by modest virtue ruled?⁷

Nec precor, ut Phœbus linguam sermone loquacem
Dédât, quem Delo peperit Latona creatrix—
Sed potius nitar precibus pulsare Tonantem,
Qui nobis placidi confert oracula Verbi,
Verbum de verbo peto, hoc Psalmista canebat,
Corde patris genitum, quod proles unica constat,
Quo pater Omnipotens per mundum cuncta creavit.
Sic patris et prolis dignetur Spiritus almus
Auxilium fragili clementer dedere servo.

⁷ Nunc igitur raros decerpant carmina flores
E quâs virgineas valeant fabricare coronas
Quid plus calicolas juvat in certamine nostro
Quam integritatis amor regnans in pectore puro?

* * * * *
The chaste who blameless keep unsullied fame
Transcend all other worth, all other praise;
The Spirit high-enthron'd has made their hearts
His sacred temple.*
* * * * *

For chastity is radiant as the gems
Which deck the crown of the Eternal King;
It tramples on the joys of vicious life,
And from the heart uproots the wish impure.
The yellow metal which adorns the world
Springs from the miry chambers of the earth:
So the pure soul, its image, takes its birth
From carnal passions of terrestrial love.
And as the rose excels the Tyrian dyes,
And all the gaudy colours work'd by art;
As the pale earth the lucid gem creates
In rustic soils beneath the dusty glebe;
As yellow flowers shoot gaily from the corn,
When spring revives the germinating earth:
So sacred chastity, the dear delight
Of all the colonies of heaven, is born
From the foul appetites of worldly life.*

* Virginitas castam servans sine crimine carmen,
Cætera virtutum vincit præconia laude;
Spiritus altithroni templum sibi vindicat almus.

* Virginitas fulget lucens, ut gemma coronæ,
Quæ caput æterni præcingit stemmate regis:
Hæc calcât pedibus spurcæ consortia vitæ:
Funditus extirpans petulantis gaudia carnis.
Auri materiem fulvi, obrizumque metallum
Ex quibus ornatur præsentis machina mundi,
Glarea de gremio prodidit sordida terræ.
Sic casta integritas auri flaventis imago
Gignitur e spurca terreni carnè parentis.
Ut rosa Puniceo tincturas murice cunctas
Coccineosque simul præcellit rubra colores.
Pallida purpureas ut gignit glarea gemmas,
Pulverulenta tegit quas spurci glebula ruris;
Ut flos flavescens scandit de cortice corni.
Tempore vernali, dum promit germina tellus:
Sic sacra virginitas cœlorum grata colonis
Corpore de spurco sumit primordia vitæ.

Maxima Bib. Vet. Patr. t. xiii. p. 4.

HISTORY OF THE

And as the vine, whose spreading branches, bent
 With stores immense, the dresser's knife despoils,
 Exists the glory of the fruitful fields;
 And as the stars confess th' all-glorious ray,
 When in his paths oblique the sun rolls round,
 Transcending all the orbs which grace the poles:
 So Chastity, companion of the bless'd,
 Excelling, meekly, every saintly worth,
 Is hail'd the queen of all the virtues here.¹⁰

* * * * *
 The chastity which rules the virtuous frame,
 A virgin flower which blooms unhurt in age,
 Falls not to earth, nor sheds its changing leaves.
 Behold the lilies waving in the fields,
 The crimson rose, sweet blushing on the bank,
 Which crowns the conquering wrestler, and becomes
 The garland for the victor in the course:
 So purity, subduing rebel nature,
 Wins the fair diadem which Christ awards.¹¹

* * * * *
 The peacock's many-colour'd plumage waves,
 And the soft circles glow with Tyrian dyes:
 Its tawny beauties and its graceful form
 Surpass the proudest labours of our skill.¹²

¹⁰ Vineæ frugiferis ut constat gloria campis,
 Pampinus immensos dum gignit palmite botros,
 Vinitor exspoliât frondentes falcibus antes:
 Sidera præclaro cedunt ut lumina soli,
 Lustrat dum terras obliquo tramite Titan,
 Cuncta supernorum convincens astra polorum:
 Sic quoque virginitas quæ sanctos indita comit,
 Omnia sanctorum transcendans præmia supplex
 Integritas quoque virtutum regina vocatur.

Maxima Bib. Vet. Patr. t. xiii. p. 4.

¹¹ Integritas animæ regnans in corpore casto
 Flos est virgineus, qui nescit damna senectæ.
 Nec cadit in terram ceu fronde ligustra fatiscunt.
 Cernite fecundis ut vernent lilia sulcis,
 Et rosa sanguineo per dumos flore rubescat.
 Ex quibus ornatus qui vincit forte palestris,
 Accipit in circo victor certamine, sarta.
 Haud secus integritas devicta carne rebeli.
 Pulchras gestabit Christo regnante coronas. *Ibid.*

¹² Quanquam versicolor flavescat penna pavonis
 Et teretes rutilent plus rubro murice cycli,
 Cujus formosa species et fulva venustas
 Omnia fabrorum porro molimina vincit. *Ibid.*

We may add from the same poem his description of the destruction of paganism, as exhibiting the degree of his powers of poetical composition :

CHAP.
III.

Not Mars, the lord of wounds, who scatters round
The seeds of war, and fills the rancorous heart
With Gorgon poisons, can assist his fanes ;
Nor Venus can avail, nor her vile boy.
The golden statues of Minerva fall,
Tho' fools proclaim her goddess of the arts ;
Nor he for whom, as ancient fictions sing,
The leafy vines their precious branches spread,
Can prop the columns nodding with their gods.
The marbles tremble with terrific crash,
And the vast fabric rushes into dust.
Ev'n Neptune, rumour'd sovereign of the waves,
Who by his swelling billows rules the main,
He cannot save his sculptur'd effigies,
Whose marble brows the golden leaves surround.
Not ev'n Alcides, who the centaurs crush'd,
And dar'd the fiery breath of prowling Cacus,
When from his throat his words in flames were pour'd,
Tho' his right hand the dreadful club may grasp,
Can shield his temples when the Christian prays.¹²

¹² Non Mars vulnificus qui belli semina spargit ;
Rancida Gorgoneis inspirans corda venenis
Delubri statuis potuit succurrere parvis.
Nec Venus, aut Veneris prodest spurcissima proles.
Aurea sternuntur fundo simulacra Minervæ,
Quamque deam stolidi dixerunt arte potentem :
Nec Bacchus valuit, cui frondent palmitæ vites,
Ut referunt falso veterum signenta librorum,
Numine nutantes fani fulcire columnas.
Sed titubant templi tremebundis marmora crustis.
Et ruit in præceps tessellis fabrica fractis.
Neptunus fama dictus regnator aquarum ;
Qui regit imperium ponti turgentibus undis,
Falsas effigies, quas glauco marmore sculpunt,
Aurea seu fulva quas ornant petala fronte,
Haud valuit veterum tunc sustentare deorum.
Alcides fertur Centauri victor opimus,
Flammea qui pressit latronis flamina Caci,
Quamvis fumosis ructaret flabra loquelis.
Herculis in crypta sed torquet dextera clavam.
Nec tamen in templo rigida virtute resultat,
Quæ famulus Christi supplex oramina fudit.

One other example will be a sufficient specimen of his *De laude Virginum*. Two sisters were condemned for refusing to sacrifice to idols. One was punished first in the presence of the other, with the hope that her constancy might be affected by her sister's suffering. Instead of this event, Secunda's speech is thus represented by Aldhelm:

Firmly she said, "Secunda ne'er will tremble;
Bring all your blood-stain'd tortures to oppress me,
Your fires, your swords, your scourges red with gore,
Your clubs, your cords, your stones that pour like hail;
Bring all your cruel instruments of pain;
Yet, conquering my tormentors, will I triumph.
As many means of death you fiercely frame,
So many crowns in heaven's bright plains will bless us."¹⁴

His poem "*De Octo principalibus Vitiis*," or on the eight principal vices, opens with an allusion to the preceding poem:

Thus have I sung the praises of the saints,
Whose fame re-echoes round the concave sky.
Now must the verse the mighty battles paint,
Waged by the vices; which from virgin tribes
Withhold the kingdoms of celestial joy,
And shut the portals of their lucid walls.¹⁵

¹⁴ Nam constanter ait, "nunquam tremebunda Secunda:
Adfer cuncta simul nobis tormenta cruenta;
Ignes et macheras et rubras vibice virgas,
Restes et fustes et dura grandine saxa.
Quot tu pœnarum genera crudeliter inferis,
Ast ego tanta feram victo tortore tropæa,
Quot tu concinnas crudi discrimina lethi
Tot nos in supera numerabimus arce coronas.

Maxima Bib. Vet. Patr. t. xiii. p. 18.

¹⁵ Digestis igitur sanctorum laudibus almis,
Quorum rumores sub cœli culmine flagrant;
Restat, ut ingentes depromant carmina pugnas,
Ex vitiis procedentes, virtutibus atque
Virginibus Christi, quæ cœli regna negabunt,
Florida lucifluæ claudentes limina portæ.

Maxima Bib. Vet. Patr. t. xiii. p. 19.

This poem contains 458 Latin hexameters. After an introduction of some length, it treats of the eight vices in this order: gluttony, luxury, avarice, anger, despair, slothfulness, vain-glory, pride. It closes with a diffuse peroration.

His allegorical introduction begins with these lines:

The crowding legions gather to the war,
Justice' fair friends, and virtue's holy troops;
'Gainst these the vices fix their camps malign,
And whirl their thickening spears of basest deeds.
The rival combat glows, the banners float,
And the loud clangor of the trumpet roars.¹⁶

On luxury he exclaims:

Indecent words from this base monster spring,
From him scurrility and folly's gibes;
Love, frivolous deceiver! and excess.
Oh what illustrious men! how great, how many!
Has this fierce enemy thrust down to hell!
Yet could he not, tho' mask'd in beauty's shape,
From Joseph tear th' excelling palm of virtue.
When the voluptuous net the fair one wove,
He spurn'd her charms, and from his garment fled;
By this he well deserv'd the throne of Memphis.¹⁷

¹⁶ Ecce catervatim glomerant ad bella phalanges,
Justitiæ comites et virtutum agmina sancta,
His adversantur vitiorum castra maligna,
Spissa nefandarum quæ torquent spicula rerum,
Æmula ceu pugnat populorum pugna duorum,
Dum vexilla ferunt et clangit classica salpex.

Maxima Bib. Vet. Patr. t. xiii. p. 19.

¹⁷ Ex hoc nascuntur monstro turpissima verba,
Nec non scurrilitas et scævo ludicra gestu,
Frivulus, et fallax amor, ac petulantia luxus.
O quantos qualesve viros, et laude celebres,
Hæc Bellona ferox sub tristia Tartara trusit!
Non sic egregium virtutis perdere palmam
Forma venustatis valuit compellere Joseph,
Qui dominam sprevit nectentem retia luxus,
Et stuprum fugiens pepli velamina liquit:
Idcirco felix meruit Memphitica sceptrum.

Maxima Bib. Vet. Patr. t. xiii. p. 20.

His declaration on avarice is in these phrases:

Next avarice leads the war, and heads a band
Of dense array, conductress of the fight;
She not alone the public streets pervades
With blood-stain'd arms, and shafts in poison dipp'd.
Her base companions follow—frauds and thefts,
A thousand lies, and actions false and vile;
Base appetites of gain, and perjuries throng:
The hosts of rapine, stain'd with every crime,
Heedless of oaths, join in an ardent band.¹⁸

His first verses on anger are,

Ferocious wrath the fourth battalion calls,
And, always raging, hurries to the fight;
He breaks the pious peace of brothers' love,
And goads their jarring minds to mutual war;
Hence impious slaughters—hence the shouts of rage—
And gnashing indignation clamours loud.¹⁹

On vain-glory he exclaims,²⁰

How the false thief his lying promise pours,
To darken all the solid bliss of life!
And can it not suffice that this fair world,
Which round the pole in devious motion glides,

¹⁸ Post Philargyria producit tertia bellum,—
Hæc ductrix pugnae stipatur milite denso.
Non sola graditur per publica strata pedestris,
Arma cruenta ferens et spicula lita veneno.
Hæc comites pravos, itidem mendacia mille,
Fraudes et fures, ac falsis frivola gestis,
Appetitus turpis lucri et perjuria inepta,
Atque rapinarum maculatos crimine questus,
Conglobat in cuneum cum falsis testibus ardens.

¹⁹ Ast vero quartam trux congregat ira catervam,
Quæ semper furibunda cupit discrimina belli:
Et ciet ad pugnam mentes discordia fratrum,
Dum copulata piæ disrumpit fœdera pacis,
Ex hoc nascuntur cædes cum strage nefandæ
Et clamor vocis, simul indignatio frendens.

Maxima Bib. Vet. Patr. t. xiii. p. 20.

²⁰ O quam falsa latro spondebat frivola mendax,
Ut concessa rudis fuscaret munera vitæ,
Nonne satis foret, ut quadro cum cardine mundus,
Quem vertigo poli longis anfractibus ambit,

Exists to gratify all human needs?
Must heavenly honours earth's frail children grasp?
What crimes, what wrong, to wretched mortals spring
From the vain passion of transcendant fame!

His *Ænigmata* may be next considered. Its poetical prologue presents to us a curious instance of that fantastic and difficult versification which some men in former times pursued. Both the beginning and the final letters of the thirty-six hexameters which compose it, present to us, in succession, one of this sentence: "*Aldhelmus cecinit millenis versibus odas.*"

A rbiter, ætherio Jupiter qui regmine scepter A
L ucifluum que simul cœli regale tribuna L
D isponis, moderans æternis legibus illu D
H orrida nam multans torsisti membra Behemot H
E x alto quondam rueret dum luridus arc E
L impida dictanti metrorum carmina præsu L
M unera nunc largire: rudis quo pandere reru M
V ersibus ænigmata queam clandestina fat U.
S i Deus indignis tua gratis dona rependi S
C astalidas nymphas non clamo cantibus istu C
E xamen neque spargebat mihi nectar in or E,
C inthi sic nunquam perlustro cacumina, sed ne C
I n Parnasso procubui, nec somnia vid I.
N am mihi versificum poterit Deus addere carme N
I nspirans stolidæ pia gratis munera ment I.
T angit si mentem, mox laudem corda rependun T
M etrica: nam Moysen declarant carmina vate M
J am dudum cecinisse celebris vexilla tropæ I
L ate per populos inlustrata, qua nitidus So L
L ustrat ab Oceani jam tollens gurgite . . . L
E t Psalmista canens metrorum carmina voc E
N atum divino promit generamine nume N
I n cœlis prius exortum, quam Lucifer orb I
S plendida formatis fudisset lumina sæcli S.
V erum si fuerint bene hæc ænigmata vers U
E xplosis penitus nevis et rusticitat E

Usibus humanis serviret rite per ævum,
Infula terrenos ni cœli comat alumnos?
Heu scelus, heu facinus, miseris mortalibus ortum!
Et hoc ex vana presertim gloria fretus!

Maxima Bib. Vet. Patr. t. xiii. p. 21.

Ritu dactilico recte decursa nec erro R
 Seduxit vana specie molimina menti S;
 Incipiam potiora; seu Deus arida serv I,
 Belligero quondam qui vires tradidit Jo B,
 Viscera perpetui roris si repleat haust U.
 Siccis nam laticis duxisti cautibus amne S
 Olim, cum cuneus transgresso marmore rubr O
 Desertum penetrat: cecinit quod carmine Davi D
 Arce poli genitor servas qui secula cunct A
 Solvere jam scelerum noxas dignare nefanda S.²¹

These ænigmata consist of twenty tetrastica, or stanzas of four lines, on various subjects, as the earth, the wind, clouds, nature, the rainbow, the moon, fortune, salt, the nettle, and such like—of fourteen pentasticha of five lines, of thirteen hexasticha of six lines each, nineteen stanzas of seven lines, ten of eight lines, eleven of nine lines, and thirteen of ten lines each.

In the collection of Boniface's letters, there is a singular Latin poem in rhyme, entitled the poem of Aldhelm, *Carmen Aldhelmi*.

As the rhimes of this composition are more remarkable than its poetry, I will cite the first few lines, with a prose translation in the notes:

Lector caste catholice	Quassantur sub ætherea
Atque obses athleticæ	Convexa cœli camera
Tuis pulsatus precibus	Dum tremit mundi machina
Obnixæ flagitantibus	Sub ventorum monarchia.
Hymnista carmen cecini	Ecce nocturno tempore
Atque responsa reddidi	Orto brumali turbine
Sicut pridem pepigeram	Quatiens terram tempestas
Quando profectus fueram	Turbabat atque vastitas
Usque diram Domnoniam	Cum fracti venti fœdere
Per carentem Cornubiam	Baccharentur in æthere
Florulentis cespitibus	Et rupto retinaculo
Et fœcundis graminibus	Desævirent in sæculo. ²²
Elementa inormia	
Atque facta informia	

This poem contains 204 lines in this measure.

²¹ Maxima Bib. Vet. Patr. t. xiii. p. 23. friend; urged by your prayers, earnestly in-

²² Chaste catholic reader, and strenuous treating me, I have composed a poem, and

Our venerable Bede attempted Latin poetry, but the Muses did not smile upon his efforts. His compositions consist of some hymns, some elegiac poetry, and the life of St. Cuthbert in hexameter verse.

CHAP.
III.
Latin Poetry
of Bede.

This Life consists of a preface and forty-six chapters, which include 979 lines. It has little other merit than that of an Anglo-Saxon labouring at Latin prosody in the dark period of the seventh century. It has not the vigour or the fancy which occasionally appear in Aldhelm's versification; and therefore a few passages only will be quoted.

He begins in this humble style:

That many lights should shine in every age,
T' illumine the loathsome shades of human night
With his celestial flame, the Lord permits:
And tho' our light supreme is Christ divine,
Yet God has sent his saints with humbler rays
To burn within his church. With sacred fire,
Love fills their minds, and Zeal inflames their speech.
He spreads his numerous torches thro' the world,
That the new rays of burning faith, diffus'd
With starry virtues, every land may fill.²³

returned an answer, as I formerly agreed to do, when I went to dismal Devonshire, through Cornwall, void of flowering turfs and fruitful grass. The vast elements are shaken under the æthereal convex chamber of the sky, while the machine of the world trembles under the monarchy of the winds.

Lo! in the night, when the wintry whirlwind has risen, the tempest shakes the earth, and desolation terrifies; when the bursting winds rage in the air, and, having broken through their confinement, madden on the earth.

²³ Multa suis Dominus fulgescere lumina seclis
Donavit, tetricas humanæ noctis ut umbras
Lustraret divina poli de culmine flamma.
Et licet ipse deo natus de lumine Christus
Lux sit summa, Deus sanctos quoque jure lucernæ
Ecclesiæ rutilare dedit, quibus igne magistro
Sensibus instet amor, sermonibus æstuat ardor,
Multifidos varium lychnos qui sparsit in orbem.
Ut cunctum nova lux fidei face fusa sub axem
Omnia sidereis virtutibus arva replet.

Smith's Bede, p. 268.

His invocation is much inferior to Aldhelm's ;

Aid me, Supreme ! the Spirit's gifts proceed
From thee ; and none can fitly sing thy grace
Without thy help. Oh, thou ! who tongues of flame
Erst gave, now send the treasures of thy word
To him who sings thy gifts !²⁴

The following legend is selected as a specimen of the general style of the narration.

The youth now bent beneath a sudden pain,²⁵
And led his languid footsteps with a pine.
When on a day as in the air he plac'd
His weary limbs, and meek yet mourning lay,
An horsemen cloth'd in snowy garments came,
And graceful as a courser :—He saluted
The youth reclin'd, who offer'd his obeisance.
“ My prompt attentions should be gladly paid
“ To you—if grievous pains did not withhold me :
“ See, how my knee is swell'd—no leech's care
“ Thro' a long lapse of time has sooth'd the evil.”
Straight leap'd the stranger from his horse, and strok'd
The part diseas'd, thus counselling ; “ The flour
“ Of wheat and milk boil quickly on the fire,
“ And spread the mixture warm upon the tumour.”

²⁴ Tu, rogo, summe, juva, donorum spiritus auctor,
Te sine nam digne fari tua gratia nescit.
Flammivomisque soles dare qui nova famina linguis
Munera da verbi linguæ tua dona canenti.

Smith's Bede, p. 268.

²⁵ Parvulus interea subiti discrimine morbi
Plectitur, atque regit vestigia languida pino.
Cumque die quadam sub divo fessa locasset
Membra dolens solus mitis puer, ecce repente
Venit eques niveo venerandus tegmine, nec non
Gratia cornipedi similis, recubumque salutat,
Obsequium sibi ferre rogans. Cui talia reddit,
“ Obsequiis nunc ipse tuis adsistere promptus
“ Vellem, in diro premeretur compede gressus.
“ Nam tumet ecce genu, nullis quod cura medentum
“ Tempore jam multo valuit mollire lagonis.”
Desilit hospes equo, palpat genu sedulus ægrum,
Sic fatus : “ Similæ nitidam cum lacte farinam
“ Olla coquat pariter ferventis in igne culinæ.
“ Hacque istum calida sanandus inunge tumorem.”

Remounting then he took the road he came ;
And Cuthbert us'd his medicine, and found
That his physician from th' exalted throne
Of the Supreme had come, and eas'd his pain,
As with the fish's gall he once restor'd
The light to poor Tobias.

There are some hymns of Bede remaining. The hymn on the year deserves our peculiar notice, as it affords an early specimen of the use of rhyme, and gives additional support to that column of evidence by which, in contradiction to the prevailing opinions on the subject, I traced the use of rhyme into the fourth century.

The first part of the hymn on the year consists of a few hexameters, some of which seem to have been meant to rhyme. These are succeeded by 58 lines, which correctly rhyme in couplets, and which are not hexameters. They are not worth a translation, being only curious for their rhimes. I add the first twelve.

Annus solis continetur quatuor temporibus,
Ac deinde adimpletur duodecim mensibus.
Quinquaginta et duabus currit hebdomadibus
Trecentenis sexaginta atque quinque diebus.
Sed excepta quarta parte noctis atque diei
Quæ dierum superesse cernitur serie.
De quadrante post annorum bis binorum terminum,
Calculantes colligendum decreverunt bissextum.
Hinc annorum diversantur longe latitudines
Quorum quidam embolismi, quidam fiunt communes,
Brevis quippe qui vocant communis lunaribus
Solis semper duodenis terminatur mensibus.
Longus autem qui omnino embolismus dicitur
Lunæ tribus atque decem cursibus colligitur

Hæc memorans conscendit equum, quo venerat, illo
Calle domum remeans. Monitus medicina secuta est,
Agnovitque sacer medicum venisse superni
Judicis a solio summo, qui munere clausos
Restituit visus piscis de felle Tobiae.

Smith's Bede, p. 269, 270.

Brevioris anni totus terminatur circulus
Trecentenis quinquaginta ac quatuor diebus,
Longus vero lunæ annus in dierum termino
Continetur trecenteno, octogeno, quaterno.²⁶

In the same poem he frequently makes his hexameters rhyme.

In another part of the same poem he introduces a series of middle rhimes, as

Adventum domini, non est celebrare Decembri,
Post ternas nonas, neque quintas ante calendas,
Pascha nec undenas, Aprilis ante calendas,
Nec post septenas, Maias valet esse calendas,
Virgo puerperio, dedit anno signa secundo,
Illius magni cycli, modo bis revolvit
Triginta que duos, quingentos qui tenet annos,
Illius angelici, dantes paschalia cycli,
Qui constat denis, annis simul atque novenis.²⁷

The comma marks the position of the middle rhyme. He adds 36 more lines of this sort.

The final rhimes above cited from this poem may serve as an illustration of what Bede says of *rhythmus*. He calls it “a modulated arrangement of words not to be examined by metrical rules, but by the number of syllables on the judgment of the ear, *as are the poems of the vulgar poets*. *Rhythmus* may be without metre, though metre cannot be without *rhythmus*.”²⁸

We have also of Bede’s a long poem on the martyr Justin. The beginning may be given to shew its form.

Quando Christus Deus noster
Natus est ex virgine
Edictum imperiale
Per mundum insonuit,

Quatenus totius orbis
Fieret descriptio.
Nimirum quia in carne
Tunc ille apparuit.²⁹

Latin Poetry
of Boniface.

Boniface, the Anglo-Saxon missionary to convert the Germans, who died in 755, attempted poetry. Some of the

²⁶ Bedæ Opera, t. i. p. 476.

²⁷ Ib. 485.

²⁸ Bede de Arte Metrica, 1. p. 57.

²⁹ Bede, t. iii. p. 367.

verses which he subjoined to his epistolary correspondence yet remain to us. In the following, the middle lines represent an acrostic of the name of the friend to whom he writes. It is in Latin rhimes. The acrostic begins when he mentions his friend's name :

C H A P.
III.

Vale frater, florentibus
Juventutis cum viribus :
Ut floreas cum Domino
In sempiterno solio
Qua martyres in cuneo
Regem canunt æthereo
Prophetæ apostolicis
Consonabunt et laudibus
Nitharde nunc nigerrima
Imi cosmi contagia
Temne fauste Tartarea
Hæc contra hunc supplicia
Alta que super æthera
Rimari petens agmina

Dominum quæ semper choris
Verum comunt angelicis.
Qua rex regum perpetuo
Cives ditat in sæculo
Iconisma sic cherubin
Ut et gestes cum seraphin
Editus apostolorum
Filius prophetarum
Summa sede ut gaudeas
Unaque simul fulgeas
Excelsi regni præmia
Lucidus captes aurea
In que throno æthereo
Christum laudes preconio.³⁰

On another occasion he closes a letter to Pope Gregory with six complimentary hexameters.³¹ Boniface is once called by a contemporary the client of Aldhelm.³²

Among the correspondents of Boniface we find some poets. Of Leobgitha, an Anglo-Saxon lady, closes a letter to him with these four verses, which are curious, for being rhimed hexameters :

Arbiter omnipotens, solus qui cuncta creavit
In regno patris, semper qui lumine fulget.
Quia jugiter flagrans, sic regnet gloria Christi
Illæsum servet semper te jure perenni.³³
Th' Almighty Judge, who in his Father's realms
Created all, and shines with endless light,
May he in glory reign, and thee preserve
In everlasting safety and delight.

She introduces these verses with a letter, of which a few

³⁰ Maxima Bib. Patrum, xiii. p. 70.
They contain nothing worth translating.

³¹ Maxima Bib. Patrum, xiii. p. 126.
³² Ib. p. 93. ³³ Ib. p. 83.

paragraphs may be selected. " I ask your clemency to con-
 " descend to recollect the friendship which some time ago
 " you had for my father. His name was Tinne : he lived in
 " the western parts, and died about eight years ago. I beg
 " you not to refuse to offer up prayers to God for his soul.
 " My mother desires also to be remembered to you. Her
 " name is Ebbe. She is related to you, and lives now very
 " laboriously, and has been long oppressed with great in-
 " firmity. I am the only daughter of my parents, and I wish,
 " though I am unworthy, that I may deserve to have you
 " for my brother ; because in none of the human race have
 " I so much confidence as in you. I have endeavoured to
 " compose these under-written verses according to the disci-
 " pline of poetical tradition, not confident with boldness, but
 " desiring to excite the rudiments of your elegant mind, and
 " wanting your help. I learnt this art from the tuition of
 " Eadburga, who did not cease to meditate the sacred law."

Of Cæna.

Cæna, an Anglo-Saxon archbishop, another of the cor-
 respondents of the German missionary, annexes to a letter
 which he wrote to Lullus, six lines, which are hexameters, but
 rhyme in the middle of each line :

Vivendo felix Christi laurate triumphis
 Vita tuis, seculo specimen, charissime cœlo,
 Justitiæ cultor, verus pietatis amator,
 Defendens vigili sanctas tutamine mandras
 Pascua florigeris pandens prædulcia campis
 Judice centenos portans venienti maniplos.³⁴

There is no more of his poetry extant.

Of Ethil-
wald.

Ethilwald, the friend and pupil of Aldhelm, was also a
 poet in this period. There is a letter from Aldhelm to his
 beloved son and pupil Æthelwald yet extant. There is
 another from the disciple to his master, conceived in terms of
 great affection and respect, in which he says that he has sent
 three poems in two different species of poetry ; one in heroic

³⁴ Maxima Bib. Pat. p. 111.

verse, the hexameter and pentameter, in seventy verses; another not formed on quantity, but consisting of eight syllables in every line, and one and the same letter, adapted to similar cross paths of lines; the third made in similar lines of verses and syllables, on the transmarine journey of Boniface.³⁴

There are no poems immediately subjoined to the letter, but within three pages some poems follow which seem to be some of those described by Ethilwald. We infer this, because the last purports by its contents to be written by Ethilwald,³⁵ and the one preceding it speaks of Aldhelm,³⁶ as if it were addressed to him. Both are in the singular sort of verse above described.

This singular versification seems to be a peculiar alliteration, which these passages illustrate:

Summum satorem solia
Sedet qui per æthralia—
Cuncta cernens cacumine
Cœlorum summo lumine—
Curvato colli cervicem
Capitis atque verticem,
Titubanti tutamina
Tribuat per solamina

Sacro sancta sublimiter
Suffragans manus fortiter.—
Caput candescens crinibus
Cingunt capilli nitidis:—
Neque nocet nitoribus
Nemerosis cespitibus
Ruris rigati rivulo
Rosculi roris sedulo—

These poems are more remarkable for these syllabic difficulties of versification than for any other quality, except the absence of the true poetical genius.

³⁴ Max. Bib. Pat. 13. 93.

³⁵ Vale, vale, fidissime,
Phile Christi charissime
Quem in cordis cubiculo
Cingo amoris vinculo—
Salutatis supplicibus
Æthelwaldi cum vocibus.

Farewel, farewel, most faithful friend, most dear to Christ; whom in the chamber of my heart I surround with the bond of love—the humble voice of Ethelwald having saluted thee.

Maxima Bib. Pat. p. 98.

³⁶ Althelmum nam altissimum
Cano atque clarissimum.

For I sing Aldhelm, the most lofty and most illustrious.

Ib. p. 98.

Alcuin was another poet who contributed to adorn the eighth century. Some of his poems have been printed among those of Walafrið Strabo, which his editor, Du Chesne, has noticed. He has left many poetical compositions, among which his verses to Charlemagne, and his religious and moral poetry, form the principal part. He sometimes rhimes, as in this poem, of which the loose measure reminds us of Swift's petition:

Quam imprimis speciosa quadriga : homo, leo, vitulus et aquila.
Septuaginta unum per capitula colloquuntur de domino paria.
In secunda subsequuntur protinus homo, leo loquitur et vitulus
Quibus inest ordinate positus decimus atque novem numerus.²⁷

Sixteen more lines follow, rhiming in the same manner.

The following poem we may call a religious sonnet. I quote it, because, as all the lines but two rhyme together at different distances, I think it an early specimen of that sort of rhyme which afterwards became improved into the sonnet.

Qui cœli cupit portas intrare patentes,
Sæpius hunc pedibus intret et ipse suis.
Hæc est perpetuæ venienti porta salutis,
Hoc est lucis iter et via jam veniæ.
Hæc domus alma Dei, hic sunt thesaura tonantis,
Sanctorum multæ reliquiæ que patrum.
Idcirco ingrediens devota mente viator,
Sterne solo membra, pectore carpe polum.
Hic Deus, hic sancti tibi spes, hic terra salutis.
Sit conjuncta tuo pectore firma fides.³³

Who seeks to enter heav'n's expanded gates,
Must oft within these sacred walls attend ;
Here is the gate of ever-during bliss,
The path of light, of pardon, and of peace,
The house of God, the treasures of his power,
And numerous relics of the holiest men.
With mind devoted, traveller, enter here,
Here spread your limbs, and fill your heart with heav'n ;
Here sacred hopes, here God himself awaits thee,
If stedfast faith thy humble mind controul.

²⁷ Alb. Opera. ed. Du Ch. p. 1686.

³³ Ibid. p. 1697.

In another poem, on a lady building a temple, who was one of the correspondents of Boniface, he mentions Ina, the Saxon king, in his way :

CHAP.
III.

A third ruler received the supreme sceptre,
Whom the nations call In with uncertain cognomen,
Who now governs by right the kingdom of the Saxons.

There is another which seems to have been meant to rhyme at different distances :

O mortalis homo mortis reminiscere casus
Nil pecude distas si tantum prospera captas.
Omnia quæ cernis variarum gaudia rerum
Umbra velut tenuis veloci fine recedunt.
Præcave non felix ne te dum nescis et audis
Quassans præcipiti dissolvat turbine finis.
Porrige poscenti victum, vel contege nudum
Et te post obitum sic talia facta beabunt.³⁸

Mortal ! the casualties of death remember !
If wealth alone we seek, we are but cattle.
Know ! all the various joys which charm below,
Like a light-flying shade will soon depart.
Beware ! lest in the hour of careless mirth
The final whirlwind shake thee into ruin.
Go, feed the hungry and the naked clothe !
Such deeds will bless thee in the grave we loathe.

Some of his poetry is pleasing. The following is his address to his cell, when he quitted it for the world :³⁹

O my lov'd cell, sweet dwelling of my soul,
Must I for ever say, dear spot, farewell !
Round thee their shades the sounding branches spread
A little wood, with flowering honours gay ;
The blooming meadows wave their healthful herbs,
Which hands experienc'd cull to serve mankind ;

³⁸ Alb. Opera. ed. Du Ch. p. 1721.

³⁹ O mea cella mihi habitatio dulcis amata
Semper in æternum, O mea cella, vale.
Undique te cingit ramis resonantibus arbos
Silvula florigeris semper onusta comis.
Prata salutiferis floreant omnia et herbis
Quas medici quærit dextra salutis ore.

By thee, mid flowery banks, the waters glide
 Where the glad fishermen their nets extend;
 Thy gardens shine with apple-bending boughs,
 Where the white lilies mingle with the rose;
 Their morning hymns the feather'd tribes resound,
 And warble sweet their great Creator's praise.
 Dear cell! in thee my tutor's gentle voice
 The lore of sacred wisdom often urg'd;
 In thee at stated times the Thunderer's praise
 My heart and voice with eager tribute paid.
 Lov'd cell! with tearful songs I shall lament thee,
 With moaning breast I shall regret thy charms;
 No more thy poet's lay thy shades will cheer,
 No more will Homer or thy Flaccus hail thee;
 No more my boys beneath thy roof will sing,
 But unknown hands thy solitudes possess.
 Thus sudden fades the glory of the age,
 Thus all things vanish in perpetual change.
 Naught rests eternal or immutable;
 The gloomy night obscures the sacred day;
 The chilling winter plucks fair autumn's flowers;
 The mournful storm the placid sea confounds;
 Youth chases wild the palpitating stag,
 While age incumbent totters on its staff.

Flumina te cingunt florentibus undique ripis,
 Retia piscator qua sua tendit ovans.
 Pomiferis redolent ramis tua claustra per hortos,
 Lilia cum rosulis candida mixta rubris.
 Omne genus volucrum matutinas personat odas
 Atque Creatorem laudat in ore deum.
 In te personuit quondam vox alma magistri,
 Quæ sacrosophiæ tradidit ore libros.
 In te temporibus certis laus sancta tonantis
 Pacificos sonuit vocibus atque animis.
 Te mea cella modo lacrymosis plango camœnis,
 Atque gemens casus pectore plango tuos.
 Tu subito quoniam fugisti carmina satum,
 Atque ignota manus te modo tota tenet.
 Te modo nec Flaccus nec fatis Homerus habebit
 Nec pueri Musas per tua tecta canunt.
 Vertitur omne decus seclī sic namque repente,
 Omnia mutantur ordinibus variis.
 Nil manet æternum, nil immutabile vere est,
 Obscurat sacrum nox tenebrosa diem.
 Decutit et flores subito hyems frigida pulcros
 Perturbat placidum et tristior aura mare.
 Quæ campis cervos agitabat sacra juventus
 Incumbit fessos nunc baculo senior.

Ah! wretched we! who love thee, fickle world!
Thou flyest our grasp and hurriest us to ruin.

CHAP.
III.

One of Alcuin's fancies in versification was to close his second line with half of the first:

Præsul amate precor, hac tu diverte viator
Sis memor Albini ut, præsul amate precor.⁴⁰

There are several poems, some short, others longer, in this kind of composition.

Many of Alcuin's poems are worthy of a perusal. Some exhibit the flowers of poetry, and some attempt tenderness and sensibility with effect. They are all distinguished by an easy and flowing versification. Several poems are addressed to his pupil Charlemagne, and mention him under the name of David, with a degree of affection which seldom approaches the throne. The adulation of a courtly poet, however, sometimes appears very gross, as in these lines, in which, alluding to Charlemagne's love of poetry, he ventures to address him by the venerable name of the Chian bard:

Dulcis Homere vale, valeat tua vita per ævum,
Semper in æternum dulcis Homere vale.

This appears in the same poem with two other childish lines:

Semper ubique vale, dic, dic, dulcissime David,
David amor Flacci, semper ubique vale.⁴¹

One of his poems consists of six stanzas, each of six lines. The two first are quoted, because this poem is very like one of the most common modes of versifying in the Anglo-Saxon poetry:

Te homo laudet,
Alme Creator,

Pectore mente,
Pacis amore,

Nos miseri cur te fugitivum mundus amamus?
Tu fugis a nobis semper ubique ruens.

Alb. Opera. ed. Du Ch. p. 1731

⁴⁰ Ib. p. 1740.

⁴¹ Ib. 1742, 1743.

Non modo parva,
Pars quia mundi est.
Sed tibi sancte
Solus imago,

Magna Creator,
Mentis in arce
Pectore puro
Dum pie vivit.⁴²

Of the other Latin poetry of the Anglo-Saxons, little need be said. We have a few fragments of some authors, but they deserve a small degree of consideration. Malmsbury has preserved to us part of a poem made on Athelstan, probably by a contemporary, of which the only curiosity is, that it is a mixture of final rhimes and middle rhimes. Where the poet ceases to rhyme at the end of his lines, he proceeds to rhyme in the middle; and where he desists from middle rhimes, he inserts his final ones.⁴³

There is some poetry on Edgar preserved by Ethelwerd;⁴⁴ and the Vedastne MS. of the life of Dunstan contains some rhiming lines.⁴⁵

⁴² Alb. Opera. ed. Du Ch. p. 780.

⁴³ The twelve first lines may be quoted as a specimen:

Regia progenies produxit nobile stemma
Cum tenebris nostris illuxit splendida gemma,
Magnus Æthelstanus patriæ decus, orbita recti,
Illustris probitas de vero nescia flecti.
Ad patris edictum datus in documenta scholarum,
Extimuit rigidos ferula crepitante magistros:
Et potans avidis doctrinæ mella medullis
Decurrit teneros, sed non pueriliter annos
Mox adolescentis vêtitus flore juventæ
Armorum studium tractabat, patre jubente.
Sed nec in hoc segnem senserunt bellica jura
Idquoque posterius juravit publica cura.

Malms. l. ii. p. 49.

⁴⁴ Ethelw. l. iv. c. 9.

⁴⁵ Acta Sanct. May.

CHAP. IV.

Of the other Literature of the Anglo-Saxons.

THE literature of the Anglo-Saxons must be dated from their conversion to Christianity. The probability that they had runic letters and songs before this era, has been already stated. But it is certain that their knowledge of books, and of the learning which had been accumulated in happier regions of the world, was derived from their religious intercourse with Rome.

CHAP.
IV.

The first step of their intellectual progress was the introduction into England of the Latin and Greek languages. The next was the collection of the authors who used these languages. Some men then came into the island who taught them, and others arose who were ambitious to learn and to communicate to others the knowledge they had acquired. We will give concise biographical sketches of the principal persons who advanced literature in these respects, as the best mode of elucidating the history of its progress.

When St. Augustin came into England teaching Christianity, the pope sent to him many books,* some of which are now extant in our public libraries. Augustin, and the monks who accompanied him, not only succeeded in establishing Christianity, but also occasioned a desire of knowledge to spread among the Anglo-Saxons in the seventh century.

Sigebert, one of the princes of the age, distinguished himself by his zeal for intellectual attainment. He had fled into France from his brother Redwald, and was there baptized. When he attained the crown of East Anglia, he established a school in his dominions for the instruction of youth, in imitation of those which he had seen in France. He was assisted

* Bede, i. 29.

in this happy effort of civilization by bishop Felix, who came to him out of Kent, and who supplied him with teachers from that part of the octarchy which Christianity and literature had first enlightened.²

At this period Ireland was distinguished for its religious literature; and many of the Anglo-Saxons, both of the higher and lower ranks, retired into it to pursue their studies or their devotions. While some assumed the monastic life, others, seeking variety of knowledge, went from one master's cell to another. The hospitable Irish received them all, supplied them with daily food, with books, and gratuitous instruction.³

Many persons in England are mentioned at this time by Bede as reading and studying the holy scriptures. To a nation whose minds were so untutored in knowledge as the Anglo-Saxons, the Jewish and Christian scriptures must have been invaluable accessions. From these they would learn the most rational chronology of the earth, the most correct history of the early states of the East, the most intelligent piety, the wisest morality, and every style of literary composition. Perhaps no other collection of human writings can be selected which would so much interest and benefit a rude and ignorant people. We shall feel all their value and importance to our ancestors, if we compare them with the Edda, in which the happiest efforts of the Northern Genius are deposited.

It has been mentioned, that Alfred lamented very impressively the happy times which England had known before his reign, and the wisdom, knowledge, and books, which then abounded.

The period of intellectual cultivation to which he alluded began to dawn when Christianity was first planted; but was advanced to its meridian lustre towards the end of the seventh century, by two ecclesiastics, whom the pope sent into England.

About the year 668, the English archbishop, who went to

² Bede, iii. 18. ³ Ib. iii. c. 28.

Rome for the papal sanction, happening to die there, the pope resolved to supply his dignity by a person of his own choice. He selected for this purpose Adrian, an abbot of a monastery near Naples, and an African. The unambitious Adrian declined the honour, and recommended Theodore, a monk at Rome, but a native of Tarsus, the Grecian city illustrious by the birth of St. Paul. The pope approved his choice, and at the age of 66 Theodore was ordained archbishop of Canterbury. His friend Adrian accompanied him to England.

Nothing could be more fortunate for the Anglo-Saxon literature than the settlement of these men in England. Both were well versed in sacred and profane literature, and thoroughly acquainted with the Greek and Latin languages. Their conversation and exhortations excited among the Anglo-Saxons a great emulation for literary studies. A crowd of pupils soon gathered round them, and, besides the scriptures and divinity, they taught the Greek and Latin languages, astronomy, arithmetic, and the art of Latin poetry.*

Theodore held his archiepiscopal station twenty-one years. He appointed Adrian to the monastery of St. Peter at Canterbury, who lived here thirty-nine years; and their presence made Kent the fountain of knowledge to all the rest of England. Bede extols the happy times which the island enjoyed under their tuition, and mentions that some of their

* Bede, iv. c. 1.—We have a curious specimen, how the Anglo-Saxons pronounced Greek, in their manner of repeating the Lord's prayer in that language. In the Cotton Library a MS. has preserved this prayer in the Greek language written in Saxon characters. It is probably a correct example of the pronunciation of Greek as introduced into England by Adrian and Theodore in the seventh century; but it certainly shews, in the division of the words, how little the writer understood of the language. I will transcribe it, placing the original by its side:

Pater imon oynys uranis agiastituto
onomansu. elthetu ebasilias genithito
to theli mansu. os senu uranu Keptasgis
tonartonimon. tonepiussion. dos simin simero
Keaffi simin. to offilemata imon oskeimis
affiomen. tus ophiletas imon Kemies ininkis
imas. isperas mon. ala ryse imas aptou
poniru.—MS. Cot. Lib. Galba, A. 18. The
character which I express by the K seems
placed for Kai.

Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς ὕρανοις· ἀγιαστῆτω τὸ
ὄνομά σου. Ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου· γενήθητω
τὸ θέλημά σου, ὡς ἐν ὕρανοις, καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.
Τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν, τὸν ἐπιούσιον δός ἡμῖν σήμερον.
Καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν, ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς
ἀφίεμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν. Καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς
ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν, ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ
πονηρῆ·

scholars were alive in his time as well versed in the Greek and Latin tongues as in their own.⁵

Among the men to whom Anglo-Saxon literature was greatly indebted, Benedict, who founded the abbey at Wermouth, must be mentioned with applause. He went several times from England to Rome, and brought back with him an innumerable quantity of books of every description, given to him by his friends, or purchased at no small expence. One of his last instructions was to keep with care the library that he had collected, and not to let it be spoilt or scattered by negligence.⁶ The importance of his attention to the arts is also noticed.

Egbert, who was archbishop of York in 712, had celebrity in his day. He was descended from the royal family of Northumbria, and is highly extolled by Malmsbury as an armoury of all the liberal arts. He founded a very noble library at York. Alcuin speaks with gratitude of this circumstance. "Give me (says he in a letter to Charlemagne) those exquisite books of erudition which I had in my own country by the good and devout industry of my master Egbert, the archbishop." To this Egbert, our Bede addresses a long letter, which remains.⁷ We have one treatise of Egbert remaining. It is a series of answers to some ecclesiastical questions.

Wilfrid was another benefactor to Anglo-Saxon literature, by favouring the collection of books. He also ordered the four evangelists to be written, of purest gold, on purple-coloured parchments, for the benefit of his soul, and he had a case made for them of gold, adorned with precious stones.⁸

We have a catalogue of the books in the library at York, collected chiefly by Egbert. They consisted of the following

Ancient fathers:

Jerom,

Hilarius,

Ambrosius,

Austin,

⁵ Bede, iv. c. 2.

⁶ Bede, Hist. Abb. 293—295.

⁷ Bede, 305.

⁸ Eddius Vita Wilf.

Athanasius,
Gregory,
Leo,
Fulgentius,
Basil,

Chrisostom,
Lactantius,
Eutychius,
Clemens,
Paulinus.

Ancient classics:

Aristotle,
Pliny,
Cicero,
Virgil,
Statius,

Lucan,
Boetius,
Cassiodorus,
Orosius,
Pompeius.

Ancient grammarians and scholiasts:

Probus,
Donatus,
Priscian,

Servius,
Pompeius,
Comminianus.

Other poets:

Victorinus,
Sedulius,
Juvenius,

Fortunatus,
Prosper,
Arator.

This was the library which Alcuin calls the treasures of wisdom which his beloved master Egbert left, and of which he says to Charlemagne, "If it shall please your wisdom, I will send some of our boys, who may copy from thence whatever is necessary, and carry back into France the flowers of Britain; that the garden may not be shut up in York, but the fruits of it may be placed in the Paradise of Tours."¹⁰

The studies which were pursued at York may be also stated, as those which they who cultivated literature generally attended to.

⁹ 3 Gale, p.730.

¹⁰ Malmsb. 1.

They were,

Grammar,

Rhetoric,

Poetry,

Astronomy,

and

Natural Philosophy;

which are thus described:

“ The harmony of the sky, the labour of the sun and
 “ moon, the five zones, the seven wandering planets. The
 “ laws, risings, and setting of the stars; and the aerial mo-
 “ tions of the sea, earthquakes; the natures of man, cattle,
 “ birds, and wild beasts; their various species and figures.
 “ The sacred scriptures.”¹¹

These were the subjects of the scholastic education at York in the eighth century.

But though literature in the seventh and eighth centuries was striking its roots into every part of England, yet it was in the monasteries almost exclusively that it met with any fit soil, or displayed any vegetation. The ignorance of the secular part of society was general and gross. Even our kings were unable to write. Wihtred, king of Kent, about the year 700, says at the end of a charter, “ I have put the sign of
 “ the holy cross pro ignorantia letterarum,”¹² on account of
 “ my ignorance of writing.” Among the kings of the seventh and eighth century, however, some exceptions appear. There are several letters extant from the Anglo-Saxon kings at this period¹³ which shew some mental cultivation. Of these sovereigns, none were more distinguished than Alfred, of Northumbria, whose voluntary exile in Ireland for the sake of study, and whose literary attainment and celebrity, we have already recorded.¹⁴ The improvements of those who sought ecclesiastical duties must have operated with considerable effect on all who were within the circle of their influence. They mingled with every order of society; they were every where respected, and often emulated.

¹¹ 3 Gale, 728.¹² Astle's Charters, No 1.¹³ See Mag. Bib. Pat. xvi. 64. 82, 83. 88.¹⁴ See our 1st vol. p. 153.

The three great luminaries of the Anglo-Saxons, whose attainments contributed so much to increase intellectual cultivation among their countrymen in the century preceding Alfred the Great, were Aldhelm, Bede, and Alcuin.

Aldhelmus, as he calls himself in his Latin poems, or, as Alfred spells it, Ealdhelm,¹⁵ Old Helmet, was of princely extraction. A kinsman of Ina was his father. He received his first tuition from the celebrated Adrian, whom we have already commemorated, and he continued his studies at Malmesbury, where Maildulf, an Irishman, had founded a monastery. He became thoroughly versed in Greek and Latin under this tutor, who, charmed by the sylvan beauties of the place, led an hermit's life there, and supported himself by teaching scholars. He returned to Kent, and resumed his studies under Adrian, till his feverish state of health compelled him to relinquish them. He mentions some of these circumstances in a kind letter to his old preceptor.¹⁶

"I confess, my dearest, whom I embrace with the tenderness of pure affection, that when, about three years ago, I left your social intercourse and withdrew from Kent, my littleness still was inflamed with an ardent desire for your society. I should have thought of it again, as it is my wish to be with you, if the course of things and the change of time would suffer me; and if divers obstacles had not prevented me. The same weakness of my corporeal infirmity boiling within my emaciating limbs, which formerly compelled me to return home, when, after the first elements, I had rejoined you again, still delays me."

In another letter he expresses his love of study, and mentions the objects to which his attention was directed. These were the Roman jurisprudence, the metres of Latin poetry, arithmetic, astronomy, and its superstitious child astrology.¹⁷

¹⁵ Alfred's Bede, v. c. 18.

¹⁶ Ibid. Malmesb. de Pont. 3 Gale, 338.

¹⁷ 3 Gale, 338. Henry has given almost the whole of it in his history, vol. i. p. 14.

He became abbot of Malmsbury, and his government was distinguished by the numerous and splendid donations of land with which the great men of his time endowed his monastery. In 705 he was made bishop of Sherborn, and in 709 he died.

It may amuse the reader to know what miracles were ascribed to him. A beam of wood was once lengthened by his prayers; the ruins of the church he built, though open to the skies, were never wet with rain during the worst weather; one of his garments, when at Rome, once raised itself high in the air, and kept there a while self-suspended; a child nine days old, at his command, once spake to clear the calumniated pope from the imputation of being its father.¹⁸ Such were the effusions of monastic fancy which our ancestors were once enamoured to read and eager to believe.

We will now pass on to his literary character.

He, while abbot, addressed a letter to Geraint, king of Cornwall, whom he styles "the most glorious lord governing the sceptre of the western kingdom," on the subject of the proper day of celebrating Easter, which yet exists;¹⁹ but which has nothing in it to deserve further notice. He addressed a learned book to Alfred, the intelligent king of Northumbria, on the dignity of the number 7, on paternal charity, on the nature of insensible things which are used in metaphors, on the rules of prosody, on the metres of poetry.²⁰

Aldhelm was highly estimated by Malmsbury, in the twelfth century, who places him above both Bede and Alcuin. Bede, his contemporary, described him as a man in every respect most learned; neat in his style, and wonderfully skilled in secular and ecclesiastical literature. Alfred translates Bede's *nitidus in sermone* into *on wordum hluttur and scinende*, clear and shining in his words.²¹ Malmsbury closes his panegyric on his style with asserting, that from its acumen you would

¹⁸ 3 Gale, 351.

¹⁹ 16 Mag. Bib. Pat. p. 65.

²⁰ 3 Gale, 339.

²¹ Alfred's Bede, v. 18.

think it to be Greek; from its splendor, Roman; and from its pomp, English.²² After these lavish commendations, it will be necessary to consider of their applicability.

His letter to Eahfrid contains a most elaborate specimen of Latin alliteration. Fifteen words begin with the same letter in the first paragraph.

“Primitus (pantorum procerum pretorumque pio potissimum paternoque præsertim privilegio) panegyricum poemata que passim prosatori sub polo promulgantes stridula vocum symphonia ac melodiæ cantilenæque carmine modulaturi hymnizenus.”

In the same letter we have afterwards “torrenda tetraë tortionis in tartara trusit.” The whole epistle exhibits a series of bombastic amplification.²³

His treatise in praise of virginity is his principal prose work, and is praised by Malmsbury for its rhetorico lepore. It is unfortunate for human genius, that the taste and judgment of mankind vary in every age, and that so defective are our criterions of literary merit, that even in the same age there are nearly as many critical opinions as there are individuals who assume a right to judge. Some things, however, please more permanently and more universally than others; and some kinds of merit, like that of Aldhelm, are only adapted to flourish at a particular period.

This singular treatise contains a profusion of epithets, paraphrases, and repetitions, conveyed in long and intricate periods. He clouds his meaning by his gorgeous rhetoric. Never content with illustrating his sentiment by an adapted simile, he is perpetually abandoning his subject to pursue his imagery. He illustrates his illustrations till he has forgotten both their meaning and applicability. Hence his style is an endless tissue of figures, which he never leaves till he has converted every metaphor into a simile, and every simile into a

²² 3 Gale, 342.

²³ Usher Syll. Hib. Ep. p. 37.

wearisome episode. In an age of general ignorance, in which the art of criticism was unknown, his diction pleased and informed by its magnificent exuberance. His imagery was valued for its minuteness, because, although usually unnecessary to its subject and to us disgusting, as a mere mob of rhetorical figures, yet, as these long details contained considerable information for an uncultivated mind, and sometimes presented pictures which, if considered by themselves, are not uninteresting, it was read with curiosity and praised with enthusiasm.

It is, however, just to his memory to say, that he was a man of genius, though of wild and uncultivated taste. His mind was as exuberant of imagery as Jeremy Taylor's. Many of his allusions, though fanciful, are apposite, and some are elegant and vigorous, both in the conception and the expression; but he injures all his beauties by their redundancy, their confusion, and their unnecessary obtrusion.

Bede.

The celebrated Bede, surnamed the Venerable,²⁴ was a priest in the monastery at Weremouth, in the kingdom of Northumbria. His simple life will be best told in his own unaffected narration. He was born in 673.

“ Born in the territory of the same monastery, when I was
“ seven years of age, I was, by the care of my relation, com-
“ mitted to the reverend Abbot Benedict to be educated, and
“ then to Ceolfrid. I passed all the time of my life in the
“ residence of this monastery, and gave all my labours to the
“ meditation of the scriptures, and to the observance of regular
“ discipline, and the daily care of singing in the church. It
“ was always sweet to me to learn to teach and to write.

“ In my 19th year I was made deacon; in my 30th, a
“ priest; both by the ministry of the most reverend bishop
“ John, by the direction of the abbot Ceolfrid.

²⁴ They who desire to know when the name Venerable was applied to Bede, may consult the Appendix to Smith's Bede, p. 106.

“ From the time of my receiving the order of priesthood
“ to the 59th year of my life, I have employed myself in
“ briefly noting from the works of the venerable fathers these
“ things on the holy scriptures for the necessities of me and
“ mine, and in adding something to the form of their sense
“ and interpretation.”

The works which he then enumerates are,
Commentaries on most of the books of the Old and New
Testament, and the Apocrypha.

Two books of Homilies.

A book of Letters to different Persons; one on the Six Ages
—on the Tabernacles of the Children of Israel—on a pas-
sage in Isaiah—on the Bissextile—on the Equinox accord-
ing to Anatotius.

The Life and Passion of St. Felix the Confessor, translated
into prose from the metrical work of Paulinus.

The Life and Passion of St. Anastasius, corrected from a bad
translation of the Greek.

The Life of St. Cuthbert, in verse and prose.

The History of the Abbots, Benedict, Ceolfrid, and Huaet-
berct.

The Ecclesiastical History of England.

A Martyrology.

A book of Hymns in various metre or rhythm.

A book of Epigrams in heroic or elegiac metre.

Book on the Nature of Things and Times.

Another book on Times.

A book on Orthography.

A book on the Metrical Art.

And a book on the Tropes and Figures used in Scripture.”

Besides these works, Bede wrote others, on Grammar, Arith-
metic, Music, Astronomy, and Astrology.

The style of Bede in all his works is plain and unaffected.
Attentive only to his matter, he had little solicitude for the

²⁹ Smith's Bede, p. 222.

phrase in which he dressed it. But though seldom eloquent, and often homely, it is clear and useful. His learning, however, considered with respect to the period in which he lived, deserves our highest admiration. His reading was multifarious, and whatever he read he appropriated. His treatise on the Six Ages gives a regular series of Jewish chronology, and then of general chronology carried down to the year 729. His History of England is the only contemporary document we have of the transactions of the Anglo-Saxon octarchy, and it furnishes us with many particulars not to be found elsewhere. His Commentaries on the Scriptures evince much reading and plain sense. His Lives of Religious Persons are disfigured with those legends which degrade his history; but as they were the object of general admiration and belief in his day, we must not censure him too hardly for a credulity which was the leading feature in the character of his age. His works on Grammar, Astronomy, Chronology, Rhetoric, and Arithmetic, were only selections from the opinions of Roman authors on these subjects; but they poured a useful flood of matter for the exercise and improvement of the Anglo-Saxon mind. In a word, his works were in themselves a little library. To have written them in such a period of ignorance with means so imperfect, displays an ardent intellect, unwearied in its exertions, and must have essentially contributed to the dispersion of that mental darkness which had overspread Europe when the Gothic nations overturned the Western empire, and partitioned its domains.

He died in the year 735, and his death is thus described by his pupil Cuthbert:

His death.

“ He was attacked with a severe infirmity of frequent short
 “ breathing, yet without pain, about two weeks before Easter
 “ Day; and so he continued joyful and glad, and giving
 “ thanks to Almighty God day and night, indeed hourly, till
 “ the day of Ascension. He gave lessons to us his disciples
 “ every day, and he employed what remained of the day in

“ singing of psalms. The nights he passed without sleep, yet
 “ rejoicing and giving thanks, unless when a little slumber
 “ intervened. When he waked he resumed his accustomed
 “ devotions, and with expanded hands never ceased returning
 “ thanks to God. Indeed I never saw with my eyes nor heard
 “ with my ears any one so diligent in his grateful devotions.
 “ O truly blessed man! He sang the passage in St. Paul, ‘ It
 “ is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God ;’
 “ and many other things from the scripture, in which he
 “ admonished us to arouse ourselves from the sleep of the
 “ mind. He also recited something in our English language ;
 “ for he was very learned in our songs ; and, putting his
 “ thoughts into English verse, he spoke it with compunction.
 “ ‘ For this necessary journey no one can be more prudent
 “ than he ought to be, to think before his going hence what
 “ of good or evil his spirit after death will be judged worthy
 “ of.’ He sang the Antiphonæ according to our custom and
 “ his own, of which one is, ‘ O King of Glory, Lord of vir-
 “ tues, leave us not orphans, but send the promise of the
 “ Father, the Spirit of Truth, upon us. Alleluia.’ When he
 “ came to the words Spirit of Truth, he burst into tears, and
 “ wept much ; and we with him. We read and wept again ;
 “ indeed we always read in tears.” After mentioning that he
 was occupied in translating St. John’s Gospel into Saxon, his
 pupil adds—“ When he came to the third festival before the
 “ Ascension Day, his breathing began to be very strongly
 “ affected, and a little swelling appeared in his feet. All
 “ that day he dictated cheerfully, and sometimes said, among
 “ other things, ‘ Make haste—I know not how long I shall
 “ last. My Maker may take me away very soon.’ It seemed
 “ to us that he knew well he was near his end. He passed
 “ the night watching and giving thanks. When the morning
 “ dawned he commanded us to write diligently what we had
 “ begun. This being done, we walked till the third hour with
 “ the relics of the saints, as the custom of the day required.

“ One of us was with him, who said, ‘ There is yet, beloved master, one chapter wanting; will it not be unpleasant to you to be asked any more questions?’ he answered, ‘ Not at all; take your pen, prepare it, and write with speed.’ He did so. At the ninth hour he said to me, ‘ I have some valuables in my little chest. But run quickly and bring the presbyters of our monastery to me, that I may distribute my small presents.’—He addressd each, and exhorted them to attend to their masses and prayers. They wept when he told them they would see him no more; but he said it was time that he should return to the Being who had formed him out of nothing. He conversed in this manner cheerfully till the evening, when the boy said, ‘ Dear master, one sentence is still wanting.’ ‘ Write it quick,’ exclaimed Bede. When it was finished, he said, ‘ Take my head in your hands, for I shall delight to sit opposite the holy place where I have been accustomed to pray, and where I can invoke my Father.’ When he was placed on the pavement, he repeated the Gloria Patri, and expired in the effort.”²⁵

Bede was very highly respected in his day. Boniface, whose life we shall next detail, asks for his works, and speaks of him as a man enriched by the divine grace with a spiritual intellect, and as irradiating his country. Pope Sergius wished his presence in Rome, for the benefit of his counsel.

Boniface.

Boniface, the archbishop of Mentz, and the missionary whose labours spread Christianity through a large part of Germany in the eighth century, was an Anglo-Saxon. Of his life we know little. His name was Winfrith.²⁶ He calls himself German Legate of the Apostolic See.²⁷ He says of himself, “ Born and nourished in the nation of the English, we wander here by the precept of the Apostolic Seat.”²⁸ From another letter, we find that he had been at Rome, to give an

²⁵ Smith's Bede, 793.

²⁶ Bon, Ep. 16 Mag. Bib. p. 71.

²⁷ Bon. Ep. 16 Mag. Bib. p. 51.

²⁸ Ib. 52.

account of his mission, and that the Pope had exhorted him to return and persevere in his efforts.²⁹ He was in the archiepiscopal dignity from 745 to 754. His activity was exerted with the greatest success between the Wezer and the Rhine. He anointed Pepin king of the Franks in 752. During his absence abroad he kept up an extensive correspondence in England. We have several of his letters to the kings of the Anglo-Saxon octarchy. He wrote to Ethelbald, king of Mercia, begging his assistance to the friend who carried his letter, and sending him some presents. To the same king he addressed a longer letter of moral rebuke and religious exhortation. Ethelbert, the king of Kent, sent to him a complimentary letter, mentioning his rumoured successes in the conversion of the Germans, and presenting him with a bowl of silver gilt. Sigebald, a king of the octarchy, wrote to him to request that he would be one of his bishops; and Æbuald, king of East Anglia, also addressed him in a very kind and respectful manner.³⁰

His letters to Nothelm, archbishop of Canterbury, to the Anglo-Saxon bishops, Daniel and Ecberth, and to several abbots and abbesses, are yet preserved. His correspondence with the son of Charles Martel, with Pepin, king of France, and with the popes Gregory II. and III., and Zachary, also exists. He appears to have been a man of considerable attainments.

Eddius, surnamed Stephanus, is described by Bede³¹ as the first singing master in the churches of Northumbria, and as having been invited from Kent by Wilfrid. He flourished about 720, and wrote the life of bishop Wilfrid: he addresses his work to bishop Acca and the abbot Tatbert. It is printed by Gale, iii. p. 40. Eddius begins it with a ridiculous prodigy. While the mother of Wilfrid was in labour with him,

²⁹ Bon. Ep. 16 Mag. Bib. p. 60.

³⁰ See these letters, 16 Mag. Bib. Pat.

³¹ Bede, l. iv. c. 2.

the house where she lay seemed to those without to be in flames. The neighbours hastened with water to extinguish them. But the fire was not real; it was only a type of Wilfrid's future sanctity and honour. The miracles of his mature age were of course not less extraordinary. To restore a dead child to life, and to heal another with his arms and thighs broken by a fall from a scaffold; a dark dungeon supernaturally illuminated; St. Michael coming from heaven to cure him of a malady; a withered hand restored by touching the cloth in which his corpse had been laid; an angel appearing with a golden cross to hinder his chamber from being burnt; are some of the effusions of Eddius's fancy, with which he feebly attempts to adorn his composition and its object.³²

The style is not so plain as Bede, nor so affected as Aldhelm; but is seldom above mediocrity.

Alcuin.

The literary friend and preceptor of Charlemagne is entitled to the most honourable notice among the Saxon literati of the 8th century. He is also called Flaccus Albinus. He was born in Northumbria, and studied at York under Egbert. He says of himself, that he was nourished and educated at York.³³

He was sent on an embassy from Offa to Charlemagne, and after this period the emperor was so highly attached to him, that in 790 he went to France, and settled there. Here he composed many works on the sciences and arts, which were valued in that day, for the use and instruction of Charlemagne. These still exist, and a number of letters from Alcuin to his royal pupil, with the answers of Charlemagne. Many poems also appear in his works, addressed to Charlemagne, on a variety of topics, under the name of David, and written in the most affectionate language. He was indefatigable in exciting the emperor to the love and encouragement of learning, and in the collection of MSS. for its dissemination. His efforts spread it through France, and his reputation contri-

³² See his Life of Wilfrid, in 3 Gale Sorip.

³³ Malmsb. de Gest. Reg. p. 24.

buted much to establish it in Europe. After the enjoyment of imperial affection and confidence to a degree which literature has never experienced in any other instance, he retired to the abbey of Saint Martin, at Tours, where he died in 804.³⁴

Two quotations, from one of his letters to Charlemagne, will shew the excellence of his heart and mind.³⁵

The merit of Alcuin's poetry we have already exhibited. His prose is entitled to the praise of learning, eloquence, and

³⁴ See his works, published by Du Chesne, at Paris, in 1617.

³⁵ I shall cite this from Henry, and add his reflection at the close.

'The employments of your Alcuinus in his retreat are suited to his humble sphere; but they are neither inglorious nor unprofitable. I spend my time in the halls of St. Martin, in teaching some of the noble youths under my care the intricacies of grammar, and inspiring them with a taste for the learning of the ancients; in describing to others the order and revolutions of those shining orbs which adorn the azure vault of heaven; and in explaining to others the mysteries of divine wisdom, which are contained in the holy scriptures; suiting my instructions to the views and capacities of my scholars, that I may train up many to be ornaments to the church of God, and to the court of your Imperial Majesty. In doing this, I find a great want of several things, particularly of those excellent books in all arts and sciences which I enjoyed in my native country, through the expence and care of my great master Egbert. May it therefore please your Majesty, animated with the most ardent love of learning, to permit me to send some of our young gentlemen into England, to procure for us those books which we want, and transplant the flowers of Britain into France, that their fragrance may no longer be confined to York, but may perfume the palaces of Tours.

'I need not put your Majesty in mind, how earnestly we are exhorted in the holy scriptures to the pursuit of wisdom; than which nothing is more conducive to a

pleasant, happy, and honourable life; nothing a greater preservative from vice; nothing more becoming or more necessary to those especially who have the administration of public affairs, and the government of empires. Learning and wisdom exalt the low, and give additional lustre to the honours of the great. "By wisdom kings reign, and princes decree justice." Cease not, then, O most gracious king! to press the young nobility of your court to the eager pursuit of wisdom and learning in their youth, that they may attain to an honourable old age, and a blessed immortality. For my own part, I will never cease, according to my abilities, to sow the seeds of learning in the minds of your subjects in these parts; mindful of the saying of the wisest man, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that." To do this hath been the most delightful employment of my whole life. In my youthful years, I sowed the seeds of learning in the flourishing seminaries of my native soil of Britain, and in my old age I am doing the same in France; praying to God, that they may spring up and flourish in both countries. I know also, O prince beloved of God, and praised by all good men! that you exert all your influence in promoting the interests of learning and religion; more noble in your actions than in your royal birth. May the Lord Jesus Christ preserve and prosper you in all your great designs, and at length bring you to the enjoyment of celestial glory.—"How few princes enjoy the happiness of such a correspondence, or have the wisdom and virtue to encourage it!" Vol. iv. p. 37.

more judgment than any of his contemporaries exhibited. But it must be recollected of him, as of all the writers of the Anglo-Saxon period, that their greatest merit consisted in acquiring and teaching the knowledge which other countries and times had accumulated. They added nothing to the stock themselves. They left it as they found it. But their examples and tuition contributed to preserve it, and to transmit it unimpaired to others. Unless such men had existed, the knowledge, which the talents of mankind had been for ages slowly acquiring, would have gradually mouldered away with the few perishing MSS. which contained it. Europe would have become what Turkey is, and mankind would have been now slowly emerging into the infancy of literature and science, instead of rejoicing in that noble manhood which we have attained.

In the days of Alfred, a great accession of knowledge was introduced among the Anglo-Saxons by the taste and patronage of that illustrious king. Nothing is more certain in the history of monarchs, than that the pursuits of the age they live in take their colour and shape from the mind and habits of the reigning prince. Under our dissolute Charles, debauchery was the fashion, and infected our poetry and polite literature. Edward III. and Henry V. made warlike fame the prevailing passion, and the civil wars which followed their reigns attest the force of the impression which they had given to our national manners. Alfred had the pure glory of pouring an intellectual light around his country, and of collecting men of knowledge from all parts to increase and perpetuate it. The cultivation of the Anglo-Saxon mind attained considerable progress under his auspices, and the prosperous reigns of his posterity for above a century displayed its happy effects.

Erigena.

Of Alfred's literary companions, Johannes Erigena, or John the Irishman, was distinguished by the acumen of his intel-

lect and the expanse of his knowledge. Though a native of the West of Europe, he was well skilled in Grecian literature,³⁵ for he translated from the Greek language a work of Dionysius, called the Areopagite,³⁶ and the Scholia of Maximus, on Gregory the theologian.³⁷ He dedicated this last work to Charles, the French king, at whose command he had undertaken both.³⁸ At the request of Hincmar, the archbishop, and another, he wrote on predestination against Gotheschalcus;³⁹ he composed also a book *De Visione Dei*;⁴⁰ and another, *de Corpore et sanguine Domini*.⁴¹ This last was written at the request of Charles the bald, who was a great patron of letters.⁴² This book was peculiarly unfortunate. It was assailed by several ecclesiastics, and adjudged to the flames.⁴³

³⁵ Bouquet, in his recueil of the ancient French chronicles, says, that after Charlemagne had obtained the Empire of the West, and an epistolary intercourse had taken place between the Franks and Greeks, "*Cæpit occidentalibus nosci et in usu esse lingua Græca.*" T. viii. p. 107.

³⁶ That the works ascribed to Dionysius, the Areopagite, are supposititious, and were written after the fourth century, see Dupin, vol. i. p. 100—111. ed. Paris, 1688. They suited the genius of Erigena, for their "*principal but est de parler des mysteres d'une maniere curieuse et recherchée, de les expliquer suivant les principes de la philosophie de Platon et en des termes platoniciens,*" p. 104.

³⁷ This was Gregory Nazianzen. Maximus, opposing some theological opinions which the imperial court approved, perished 662. Dupin, t. vi. John's translation was published by Dr. Gale, at the end of his treatise *De Divisione Naturæ*, ed. Ox. 1681.

³⁸ So he declares in his dedication. He tells the king, "*Difficillimum prorsus (orthodoxissime regum) servulo vestro imbecilli valde etiam in Latinis quanto magis in Græcis, laborem injunxistis.*" He states, that what he found in Dionysius obscure and incomprehensible, Maximus had very lucidly explained. He particularizes instances which are certainly among the most recondite, and happily most useless topics of theological logic.

³⁹ Fab. Bib. Med. l. ix. c. 401. This brought upon John, besides Prudentius Tricassimus, Florus of Lyons, who attacked him in the name of the Church at Lyons. Fab. l. iv. c. 194. and Cave Hist. Lit. 447.

⁴⁰ Mabillon found this in MS. It begins "*Omnes sensus corporei ex conjunctione nascuntur animæ et corporis.*" Fab. Med. l. ix. p. 401.

⁴¹ Fab. p. 404.

⁴² Heric, the bishop of Austin, says, in his letter to Charles, in 876, "*Quidquid igitur literæ possunt, quidquid assequuntur ingenia vobis debent.*" Bouquet, vii. p. 563. The editor quotes a monk of Saint Denys, in the same age, who says, "*Karolus—disciplinas adeo excoluit ut earum ipse quarundam munere sagacissime fungeretur,*" ib. A passage of Heric's letter deserves quotation, because what he hints of the emigration of Irish literature may account for Erigena's being in France: "*Quid Hiberniam memorem, contempto pelagi discrimine, pene totam cum grege philosophorum ad littora nostra migrantem—quorum quisque peritior est, ultro sibi indicit exilium ut Solomoni sapientissimo famuletur ad votum.*" Bouq. vii. p. 563.

⁴³ In 1050 and 1059, an old Chronicler speaks apparently of this book, when he says of Berengarius, "*Joannem Scotum igni comburens, cujus lectione ad hanc nefariam devolutus fuerat sectam.*" Fab. p. 404.

His principal work was, his *Treatise De Divisione Naturæ*, a dialogue which is distinguished for its Aristotelian acuteness, and extensive information. In his discussions on the nature of the Deity, and in considering how far his usual attributes describe his nature, or but metaphorically allude to it, he manifests great subtlety.⁴⁴ On the applicability of the categories of Aristotle, to the same Being, he is also very acute and metaphysical; and he concludes, that none of the categories are in this case applicable, except perhaps that of relation, and even this but figuratively.⁴⁵ In his consideration, whether the category place be a substance or an accident, he takes occasion to give concise and able definitions of the seven liberal arts, and to express his opinion on the composition of things.⁴⁶ In another part, he inserts a very elaborate discussion on arithmetic, which, he says, he had learnt from his infancy.⁴⁷ He also details a curious conversation on the elements of things, on the motions of the heavenly bodies, and other topics of astronomy and physiology. Among these, he even gives the means of calculating the diameters of the lunar and solar circles.⁴⁸ Besides the fathers, Austin, the two Gregorys, Chrysostom, Basil, Epiphanius, Origen, Jerome, and Ambrosius, of whose works, with the Platonising Dionysius, and Maximus, he gives large extracts; he also quotes Virgil, Cicero, Aristotle, Pliny, Plato, and Boetius; he details the opinions of Eratosthenes,⁴⁹ and of Pythagoras on some astronomical topics;⁵⁰ he also cites Martianus Capella.⁵¹ His knowledge of Greek appears almost in every page.

⁴⁴ *De Divisione Naturæ*, p. 6—11.

⁴⁵ *Ib.* p. 13.

⁴⁶ *Ib.* p. 18, 19.

⁴⁷ *Ib.* p. 111.

⁴⁸ *Ib.* p. 144—149.

⁴⁹ *Ib.* 146, 147, 149.

⁵⁰ *Ib.* 145—149.

⁵¹ *Ib.* 147, 148. This ancient author, whose æra is not ascertained (though he must have preceded Gregory of Tours, who

mentions him) left nine books, two de *Nuptiis Philologiæ*, the other seven on the seven liberal arts. His work was twice printed with innumerable mistakes. Grotius, in his fourteenth year, astonished the world by correcting justly almost all the errors. The recollection of this induced Vossius to say, "Quo Batavo—nihil nunc undique eruditius, vel sol videt, vel solum sustinet." *Hist. Lat.* 713. How highly Capella was

The *Divisione Naturæ* certainly indicates great curiosity and research of mind, though it rather exercises ingenuity than conveys information. In a future age, when such disquisitions were offensive to that anti-christian despotism which was spreading its clouds over the European hemisphere, a pope, Honorius III. issued a bull to declare, that it "abounded with the worms of heretical depravity." He complains, that it was received into monasteries, and that "scholastic men, more fond of novelty than was expedient, occupied themselves studiously in reading it." He therefore commands, that they "solicitously seek for it every where; and, if they safely could, that they send it to him to be burnt, or to burn it themselves." He excommunicates all such as should keep a copy fifteen days after notice of this order.⁵²

Erigena was in great favour with Charles. The king, one day as they were feasting opposite to each other, took occasion to give him a gentle rebuke for some irregularity, by asking him, "What separates a Scot from a sot?" The philosopher, with ready wit, retorted, "the table."⁵³ The king had the good sense and friendship, to smile at the turn.

At another time, when he was at table, the servants brought in a dish containing two large fishes, and a very small one. John was a thin little man, and was sitting near two ecclesiastics of vast size. The king bade him divide the dish with them. John, whose cheerful mind was always alive to pleasantry, conveyed the two large fishes into his own plate, and

once esteemed, may be inferred from the panegyric of Gregory of Tours, l. x. c. 31. p. 243. Barthius, one of those mighty scholars whose race is now extinct, says of him, "Jam ante ipsos mille annos tanta Capellæ hujus auctoritas, ut qui eum teneret, videretur omnium artium arcana nosse." *Adversaria*, c. 23. p. 409. Barthius describes his work thus: "Tota fere ibi Cyclopædia novem chartis absoluta est, cum innumeris interioris sapientiæ mysteriis versu atque prosa oratione indicatis et propositis," *ib.* p. 960. For what is known of

Capella, see *Fab. Bib. Lat.* iii. p. 213—224.

⁵² See this bull at length in *Fab. Bib. Med.* l. ix. 402. It is dated 10 Kal. Feb. 1225.

⁵³ *Matt. West.* 333. *Malmsb.* 3 Gale, 360. The Latin words which John so readily converted into a pun that retorted the king's sarcasm on himself, are, "Quid distat inter sottum et Scottum?" but I do not recollect any English phrase which at the same time will exactly imply difference and distance.

divided the little one between the ecclesiastics. The king accused him of an unfair partition. "Not so," says John. "Here are two large fishes," pointing to his plate, "with a small one," alluding to himself. "There are also two large ones," looking at the divines, "and a little one," pointing to their plates.⁵⁴

After Charles's death, he was invited to England by Alfred, whose munificence rewarded his talents; he placed him at Malmsbury,⁵⁵ and also at Ethelingei.

The life of John ended unfortunately; he was stabbed by the boys he taught.⁵⁶ That he died violently, will not be questioned; but a controversy accompanies the catastrophe.⁵⁷ The character of this extraordinary man demands some celebrity; and though we despise the fable of a celestial light adorning his body for several nights,⁵⁸ it is just to let the

⁵⁴ Malmsb. 3. Gale 361. That John was an inmate in Charles's palace, we also learn from his contemporary, Pardulus, who says, "Scotum illum qui est in palatio regis Johannem nomine." Testim. prefixed.

⁵⁵ Venitque ad regem Elfredum cujus munificentia illectus et magisterio ejus, ut ex scriptis regis intellexi, sublimis Melduni resedit. Malmsb. 361.

⁵⁶ So Malmsb. 361. The same words are in Matt. West. 334.; and Hoveden, 419.; and Fordun, 670.

⁵⁷ The question is, whether Erigena, whom William kills at Malmsbury, is the same of whom Asser says, that he was placed by Alfred over his new monastery at Ethelingei, and that some malicious monks hired two lads to kill him at midnight, when he came to pray alone at the altar, p. 61. My own opinion is, that they are not two persons: 1st. Asser, in page 47, talks of a John, who, by the traits he gives, was Erigena. He there styles him merely "Johannem presbyterum et monachum," and he has the same phrases of the John killed at Ethelingei, in p. 61. 2d. Ingulf expressly places Erigena at Ethelingei, p. 27. 3d. Asser says, the John of Ethelingei was stabbed by two French lads, "duos servulos," 62.; and it is a little romantic that another John should at the same time be killed by lads. 4th. The

ancient epitaph quoted by Malmsbury says he was *martyred*, which is an expression very suitable to Asser's account of his being stabbed at the altar when praying, and of the assassins intending to drag his body to a prostitute's door. 5th. Asser's account agrees with Malmsbury's, as to his assassins being lads, *whom he taught*; for Asser says, that Alfred placed in that monastery French children to be taught. 6th. The mode of the assassination is the same in both. Malmsbury says, 361, "Animam exuit tormento gravi et acerbo ut dum iniquitas valida et manus infirma sæpe frustaretur et sæpe impeteret, amaram mortem obiret." I understand this to imply many wounds, and not immediate death. Asser says, "Et crudelibus afficiunt vulneribus," p. 63. and that the monks found him not dead, and brought him home so, "semivivum colligentes cum gemitu et mærore domum reportaverunt," p. 64. I think it improbable that two persons of the same name and station should at the same time have experienced the same singular catastrophe. I would rather suppose that Erigena had been abbot of both places, and therefore the memory of the crime was preserved at both. Asser had the property of two monasteries given to him by Alfred, p. 50.

⁵⁸ Malmsb. 361.

memory of his talents illuminate his name. The combination of convivial pleasantries, extensive learning, and metaphysical subtlety, is a felicity which nature too seldom exhibits to be willingly forgotten.

But the most distinguished scholar in the ninth century, Alfred. was Alfred himself, who translated Orosius, Bede's History, Boethius, and the Pastorals of Gregory.

The work of Orosius is a summary of ancient history, ending with the year 417, at which period he was alive.⁵⁹ He was a Spaniard and a Christian. He wrote it to repel the charge, that the political evils of his times had arisen, because the idols had been laid aside, and Christianity was established. His object was to prove, that calamities, as severe as those which were then afflicting the Roman empire, had in all ages occurred.⁶⁰ He quotes some historians now lost, as Claudius⁶¹ on the Roman Conquest of Macedonia, and Antias⁶² on the war against the Cimbri and Teutones.

The history of Orosius became very popular. It appears to have been the source from which Bede has taken the little he has mentioned of the Roman transactions,⁶³ and it may have been the best abridgment of ancient history which was known in the days of Alfred. Perhaps its melancholy cast (for it is a history of human miseries)⁶⁴ gave it some recommendation to a king who had his full share of evils to endure.

⁵⁹ Fab. Bib. Med. l. xiv. p. 514.

⁶⁰ See his preface ad Aurelium Augustinum, p. 1. of Havercamp's edition, Leyden, 1738.

⁶¹ L. iv. c. 20. l. v. c. 3. There was an ancient Roman historian, named Q. Claudius Quadrigarius, whom Livy, Gellius, and others mention. He was contemporary with Sisenna, whom Paternus places in the time of Marius and Jugurtha. Vossius Hist. Lat. p. 44, 41.

⁶² L. v. c. 16. and l. v. c. 3. Valerius Antias left annals of some magnitude. Their 74th book is cited by Priscian, the 75th by Gellius. He flourished at the same time with Claudius. Vossius, p. 44. Barrington remarks, from a circumstance respecting Re-

gulus, that Orosius must have seen Tubero's history, which Aulus Gellius mentions, and also the history which Gellius cites as the *vetus historia rerum punicarum*. Preface, p. 6.

⁶³ Thus the 2d chapter of his first book is Orosius, l. vi. c. 9. with a few previous lines, and with the first paragraph of Orosius's tenth chapter. So Bede's 3d chapter is composed chiefly of extracts from Orosius, l. vii. c. 6. Bede's 4th chapter begins from Orosius, l. vii. c. 15. His 5th is an extract from Orosius, l. vii. c. 17. with one addition. His 6th is Orosius, l. vii. c. 25.

⁶⁴ The Codex Lugd. Bat. so entitles it, "*Orosii de cladibus et miseriis antiquorum libri septem.*" Havercampi præfatio.

BOOK
XII.

In his translation of Orosius into the Anglo-Saxon,⁶⁵ Alfred has omitted the preface and the first chapter; or at least the Cotton MS. now extant has not preserved these. In the second chapter, which is an epitome of geography, the king does not always render his author with literal servility. Sometimes he abbreviates, sometimes he inserts some little particulars, which indicate a curiosity that had sought elsewhere for the information it coveted.⁶⁶

A principal addition of his own composition is a sketch of Germany,⁶⁷ which he introduces, and which is so curious a specimen of his inquisitive mind, that we shall insert it here, together with the most valuable voyages of Ohther and Wulfstan, which he wrote from their narration.

Alfred's
notitia of
Germany.

“Then north against the source of the Donua, and to the east of the Rhine, are the East Francan;⁶⁸ south of them are the Swæfas;⁶⁹ on the other part of the Danube, and south of them, and to the east, are the Bægth-ware,⁷⁰ in the part which men call Regnes-burh;⁷¹ right east of them are the Beme;⁷²

⁶⁵ The principal MS. of it is in the Cotton Library, Tiberius, B. 1. which is very ancient and well written. In 1773, the honourable Daines Barrington published the Anglo-Saxon Orosius, with an English translation. His MS. was a transcript formerly made from this.

⁶⁶ These are too many to be all detailed. I will only mention a few as specimens: Orosius says, Asia is surrounded on three sides by the ocean. Alfred adds, on the south, north, and east. What Orosius calls “our sea,” as the Mediterranean, Alfred names Wendel sæ. Sarmaticus, he translates sermondisc. O. speaks of Albania. A. says it is so named in Latin, “and we by hatath nu Liobene.” O. mentions the boundaries of Europe; A. gives them in different phrases, mentions the source of the Rhine and Danube, and names the Cwæn sæ. Speaking of Gades, he adds, “On thæm ilcan Wendel sæ on hyre Westende is Scotland.” He adds also of the Tygris, that it flows south into the Red Sea. Numerous little traits of this sort may be observed. I neither affirm nor expect that the king is accurate in all his additions.

⁶⁷ Barrington's Orosius, p. 19—21. Barrington says, he did not collate all his MSS. with the one in the Cotton Library. In the extract now quoted, I found on comparison only these differences: Syssyle B. Sysyle MS.; Alpis hætt, l. 17. p. 20, B. hætt alpis, MS.; Meroaro, B. l. 21. Maroaro, MS.; Northan eastan, l. 23. B. Eastan northan, MS.; Mægthaland, l. 27. Mægthaland. In the next line Mægthalan deis not followed by “is.” In p. 21. l. 3. be him, is him be; and in the next line sæ hætt ost, is ost sæ hætt. In l. 12. the second “him” is wanting; and in p. 20. l. 15. Bægthware should be Bægware.

⁶⁸ My notes of modern names to this sketch are taken from Mr. J. R. Forster's notes, which Barrington has annexed to his translation, and to which I refer the reader. Donua is the Danube.

⁶⁹ The Suabians. The names are literally from the MSS.

⁷⁰ The Bavarians.

⁷¹ Ratisbon; it is called in the German Regensburgh.

⁷² The Beme and Behemas are the Bohemians.

and to the north-east the Thyringas;⁷³ north of them are the Eald Seaxan; and north-west of them are the Frysan.⁷⁴

“ West of the Eald Seaxum is the mouth of the Ælfe River and Friesland; and thence north-west is that land which men call Angle and Sillende, and some part of Dena;⁷⁵ north of them is Apdrede;⁷⁶ and north-east the Wilds that men call Æfeldan; and east of them is Wineda land, that men call Sysyle, and south-east over some part Maroaro;⁷⁷ and these Maroaro have west of them the Thyringas and Behemas, and half of the Bægware; south of them, on the other half of the river Donua, is the land Carendre.⁷⁸

“ South to the mountains that men call Alpis, to these same mountains lie the boundaries of Begth-wara land, and Swæfa; and then by the east of Carendra land, beyond the desarts, is Pulgara land;⁷⁹ east of this is Creca land;⁸⁰ east of Maroaro land is Wisleland;⁸¹ east of this is Datia, where formerly were the Gottan.⁸²

“ North-east of Maroara are the Dulamensan;⁸³ and east of the Dalomensan are the Horithi; and north of the Dalomensan are the Surpe;⁸⁴ and west of them are the Sysele. North of the Horiti is Mægthaland; and north of Mægthalande is Sermende,⁸⁵ to the Riffin mountains.

“ Sout-west of the Denum is that arm of the ocean which lieth about the land Brittannia, and north of them is that arm of the sea which men call Ost sea.⁸⁶ To the east of them, and to the north of them, are the North Dene, either on the

⁷³ Thuringians.

⁷⁴ The old Saxons and the Frisians.

⁷⁵ Ælfe the Elbe; Angle, Anglen; Sillende, Zealand; Dena, Denmark.

⁷⁶ The Obotritæ settled in Mecklenburgh.

⁷⁷ The Moravians.

⁷⁸ Carinthia.

⁷⁹ Bulgaria.

⁸⁰ Greece.

⁸¹ Wisleland is that part of Poland which is commonly called Little Poland, for here the Vistula rises, which in Polish is called Wisla.

⁸² The Goths.

⁸³ Dalamensæ are those Slavonians who formerly inhabited Silesia from Moravia, as far as Glogau, along the Oder. Wittekind calls them Sclavi Dalamanti.

⁸⁴ The Sorabi, Sorbi, or Sorvi, who lived in Lusatia, and Misnia, and part of Brandenburg and Silesia, below Glogau; their capital was Soraw, a town which still exists. I vary the orthography as the MS. does.

⁸⁵ The Sarmatæ.

⁸⁶ The Germans have for the Baltic no other name than the Ost Sea.

greater lands or on the islands; and east of them are the Afdrede; south of them is the mouth of the river Ælfe, and some part of Eald Seaxna.

“The North Dene have on their north, that same arm of the sea which men call Ost; and east of them are the Osti⁸⁷ nation, and Afdrede on the south. The Osti have on the north of them the same arm of the sea, and the Winedas and Burgendas;⁸⁸ and south of them are the Hæfeldan.

“The Burgendan have the same arm of the sea west of them, and the Sweon⁸⁹ on the north; east of them are the Sermende; south of them are the Surfe. The Sweon have to the south of them the Osti arm of the sea; east of them are the Sermende; and north over the wastes is Cwenland; north-west are the Scride Finnas; and west, the Northmenn.”

Such is the notitia of Germany, which Alfred has inserted in his Orosius. As it displays the ideas of an inquisitive king, on the positions of the German nations in the ninth century, it is peculiarly valuable, and well deserves an elaborate commentary.

To this delineation of Germany, Alfred adds an interesting account of the voyage of Ohthere, towards the North Pole,⁹⁰ and of the voyage of Wulfstan in the Baltic. As it is the king's composition, and gives a curious sketch of several nations in the ninth century, we think it a duty to insert it.⁹¹

“Ohthere said to his lord, king Ælfred,⁹² that he abode

⁸⁷ The same whom Wulfstan calls the Estum. The northermost part of Livonia still bears the name of Estland.

⁸⁸ Bornholm, the contraction of Borgundeholm, Wulfstan calls Burgundaland.

⁸⁹ The Swedes.

⁹⁰ Whoever now reads Ohthere's voyage, will hardly think it possible that any one could have so mistaken it, as to say it was a voyage to discover a *northern passage to the East Indies*. Yet hear Voltaire! “Qui croirait meme que cet Alfred dans des temps d'une ignorance generale osa envoyer un vaisseau pour tenter de trouver un passage aux Indes par le nord de l'Europe et de

l'Asie. On a la relation de ce voyage ecrite en Anglo-Saxon, et traduite en Latin a Copenhague a la Priere du Comte de Plelo, ambassadeur de Louis XV.” *Essai sur les mœurs*. Œuvres. t. xvi. p. 475.

⁹¹ As Barrington did not collate his copy with the ancient Cotton MSS. Tiberius, B. 1. I shall insert the original Anglo-Saxon of this extract, from that MS. I have given in the text a literal translation, but in the common characters, to be more easily read.

⁹² It has been mentioned already, that Alfred engaged foreign seamen in his service.

the northmost of all the Northmen. He declared, that he abode on those lands northward against the West Sea. He said, that that land is very long to the north, and is all waste, except in few places; the Finnas dwell scattered about; they hunt in winter, and in summer they fish in the sea.⁹¹

“He said, that on some occasion he wished to find out how long that land stretched to the north, or whether any man abode to the north of those wastes.” Then went he right north of those lands, leaving the waste land all the way on the starboard, and the wide sea on the larboard. Three days was he as far north as the whale hunters farthest go. Then went he yet right north as far as he might sail for three other days; the land bent there right east, or the sea in on that land, he knew not whether; but he knew, that he there expected a west wind, or a little to the north. He sailed thence east of the land, so as he might in four days sail. Then should he there abide a right north wind, because that land inclined right south, or the sea in on that land, he knew not whether.”⁹²

“Then sailed he thence right south of the land, so as he might in five days sail. Then lay there a great river up in that land. Then returned they up from in that river, because they durst not sail forth by that river from hostility, for that land was all inhabited on the other side of the river. Nor did

⁹¹ Ohthere sæde his hlaforde Ælfrede Kynincge thæt he ealra Northmanna north mest bude. He cwæth thæt he bude on thæm lande northweardum withtha west sæ. He sæde theah thæt thæt land sý swýthe lang north thanon ac hit is eall weste buton on feawum stowum; sticce mælum wiciath Finnas; on huntathe on wintra, and on sumera on fiscothe be thære sæ. Tib. B. 1. p. 9.

⁹² Here is a clear account of the extent of his maritime curiosity, which is nothing like exploring a passage to the Indies.

⁹³ He sæde thæt he æt sumum cýrre wolde fandian hu lange thæt land north rihte læge, oththe hwæther ænig man be northan thæm westene bude. Tha for he

north rihte be thæm lande; let him ealne weg thæt weste land on thæt steorbord 7 tha wid sæ on bæcbord. Thry dagas tha wæs he swa feor north swa tha hwæl huntan fyrrest farath. Tha for he tha gýt north rýhte swa he mihte on thæm othrum thrim dagum geseglian. Tha beah thæt land thær east rýhte, oththe sio sæ in on thæt land he nýste hwæther: buton he wiste thæt he thær bad westan windes, oththe hwon northan; and seglede thanon east be lande swa swa he mihte on feower dagum geseglian. Tha sceolde he bidan rýhte northan windes forthan thæt land thær beah suthrihte, oththe seo sæ in on thæt land, he nyste hwæther.

he meet before any inhabited land, since he went from his own home, but to him all the way was waste land on the starboard, except the fishers, fowlers, and hunters; and these were all Finnas: on his larboard, there was a wide sea.⁹⁶

“The Beormas had very well inhabited their land, and he durst not come there; but Terfinna land was all waste, except where the hunters, or the fishers, or the fowlers settled.”⁹⁷

“The Beormas told him many accounts either of their own lands, or of the lands that were about them; but he knew not what was truth, because he did not see it himself. He thought the Finnas and the Beormas nearly spoke one language. He went thither shaping his course rather to each of these lands for the horse whales, because they have very good bone in their teeth. He brought some of the teeth to the king; the hides are very good for ship ropes. These whales are much less than the other whales, not are they longer than seven ells long.”⁹⁸

“On his own land are the best whales hunted; they are forty-eight ells long, and the largest fifty ells. There, he said, that of some fish,” he slew sixty in two days.¹⁰⁰

“He was a very wealthy man in those possessions that be

⁹⁶ Tha seglede he thanon suthrihte be lande swa swa he mihte on fif dagum geseglian. Tha læg thær an mýcel ea up in tha land. Tha cýrdon hý up in on tha ea for thæm hý ne dorston forth be thære ea seglian for unfrihte; for thæm thæt land was eall gebun on othre healse thære ea: ne mette he ær nan gebun land syththan he fram hýs agnum hame for. Ac him was ealne weg weste land on thæt steorbord butan fisceran 7 fugeleran 7 huntan 7 thæt wæran ealle Finnas 7 him was a wid sæ on thæt bæc bord.

⁹⁷ Tha Beormas hæfdon swithe well gebun hýra land. Ac hi ne dorston thær oncumman. Ac thara Terfinna land was eall weste butan thær huntan gewicodon, oththe fisceras oththe fugleras.

⁹⁸ Fela spella him sædon tha Beormas ægther ge of hýra agenum lande ge of thæm lande the ýmbhýutan wæran. Ac he nýste

hwæt thæs sothes wæs for thæm he hit sylf ne geseah. Tha Finnas him thuhte 7 tha Beormas spræcon neah an getheode. Swithost he for thýder to eacan thæs landes sceapunge for thæm hors hwælum for thæm hi habbath swýthe æthele ban on hýra tothum; tha teth hý brohton sume thæm cýnincge 7 hýra lýd bith swithe god to scip rapum. Se hwæl bith micle læssa thonne othre hwalas ne bith he lengra thonne sýfan elna lang.

⁹⁹ The Saxon words of this sentence have perplexed the translators. I have ventured to give it some meaning, by supposing that sýxa (rýxa) is an error in the MS. and should be fýxa (fýxa.)

¹⁰⁰ Ac on his agnum lande is se betsta hwæl huntath tha beoth eahta and feowertiges elna lange 7 tha mæstan fiftiges elna lange thara he sæde thæt he sýxa sum ofslode sýxtig on twam dagum.

their wealth; that is, in wild deer. He had then yet when he sought the king 600 unbought tame deer; these deers they call hranas. There were six decoy hranas; they be very dear amid the Finnas, because they take the wild hranas with them.¹⁰¹

“ He was amid the first men in those lands, though he had not more than twenty horned cattle, and twenty sheep, and twenty swine; and the little that he ploughed, he ploughed with horses. But their wealth is most in those gafol that the Finnas pay to them. These gafol be in deer skins, and in birds feathers, and whales bones, and in the ship ropes that be made of the whales hides, and of seals.¹⁰²

“ Every one pays according to his birth. The best born shall pay fifteen martens skins, and five hranas, and one bear skin, and ten ambra of feathers, and a kyrtel of bears or otters skin, and two ship ropes, each to be sixty ells long; some are made of whales hide, some of seals.¹⁰³

“ He said, that Northmanna land was very long and very small; all that his men might use for pasture or plough, lay against the sea, and even this is in some places very rocky. Wild moors lay against the east, and along the inhabited lands. In these moors the Finnas dwell.¹⁰⁴

“ The inhabited land is broadest eastward, but northward becomes continually smaller. Eastward, it may be sixty miles

¹⁰¹ He was swýthe spedig man on thæm æhtum the heora speda on beoth tha is on wildrum. He hæfde tha gýt tha he thone cýninge sohte tamra deora unbebohra sýx hund: tha deor hi hatath hranas: thara wæron sýx stæl hranas; tha beoth swýthe dýre mid Finnum for thæm hý foth tha wildan hranas mid.

¹⁰² He was mid thæm fyrstum mannum on thæm lande: næfde he theah ma thonne twentig hrythera 7 twentig sceapa 7 twentig swýna 7 thæt lýtle thæt he erede he erede mid horsan. Ac hyra ar is mæst on thæm gafole the tha Finnas him gýldath; thæt gafol bith on deora fellum 7 on fugela fetherum 7 hwales bane 7 on thæm scip rapum the beoth of hwales hýde geworht 7 of seoles.

¹⁰³ Æg hwile gýlt be hýs gebýrdum: se byrdesta sceall gýldan fiftyne mearthes fell 7 fif hranes 7 anberan fel 7 tyn ambra fethra 7 berenne kyrtel oththe ýterenne 7 twegen scip rapas, ægther sý syxtig elna lang other sý of hwales hýde geworht other of seoles.

¹⁰⁴ He sæde thæt Northmanna land wære swýthe lang 7 swýthe smæl; eal thæt his man ather oththe ettan oththe erian mæg, thæt lith withtha sæ 7 tha is theah on sumum stowum swýthe cludig 7 licgath wilde moras with eastan 7 with upp on emnlange thæm bynum lande. On thæm morum eardiath Finnas.

broad, or a little broader; midway thirty or broader; and to the north, he said, where it was smallest, it might be three miles broad to the moors. The moors are in some places so broad, that a man might be two weeks in passing over them. In some places their breadth was such that a man might go over them in six days.¹⁰⁵

“ Even with these lands, southward, on the other half of the moors is Sweo-land; to that land, northward, and even with the land northward, is Cwenaland. The Cwenas make depredations, sometimes on the Northmen over the moors (sometimes the Northmen on them); and there are many great fresh lakes over these moors, and the Cwenas carry their ships overland to the lakes, and thence plunder the Northmen. They have ships very little and very light.¹⁰⁶

“ Ohthere said, the shire was called Halgoland that he abode in. He declared that no man abode north of him. There is one port on the southward of these lands; this men call Sciringes-heale; thither he said man might not sail in a month, if he rested at night, and every day had a favourable wind: all the while he shall sail by the land and on the steorboard, the first to him would be Iraland, and then the islands that are betwixt Iralande and this land; then is this land till he comes to Sciringes-heale.¹⁰⁷

“ All the way on the bæcboard is Norway; against the

¹⁰⁵ 7 thæt byne land is easte weard bradost 7 sýmle swa northor swa smælre; easte werd hit mæg bion sýxtig mila brad oththe hwene brædre 7 middle weard thritig oththe bradre 7 northe weard he cwæth thær hit smalost wære tha hit mihte beon threora mila brad to thæm more 7 se mor syththan on sumum stowum swa brad swa man mæg on twam wucum ofer feran 7 on sumum stowum swa brad swa man mæg on sýx dagum ofer feran.

¹⁰⁶ Thonne is to emnes thæm lande suthe weardum on othre healfe thæs mores Sweo-land oth thæt land northweard 7 to emnes thæm lande northeweardum Cwenaland. Tha Cwenas hergiath hwilum on tha Northmen ofer thone mor (hwilum tha Northmen

on hý) 7 thær sint swithe micle meras fersce geond tha moras 7 berath tha Cwenas hýra scýpu ofer land on tha meras 7 thanon hergiath on tha Northmen hý habbath swýthe lýtle scýpa 7 swýthe leohte.

¹⁰⁷ Ohthere sæde tha sio scir hatte Halgoland the he on bude: he cwæth thæt nan man ne bude be northan him. Thonne is an port on suthe weardum thæm lande thone man hæf Sciringes heal; thyder he cwæth tha man ne mihte geseglian on anum monthe gyth man on niht wicode 7 ælce dæge hæfde ambýrne wind 7 ealle tha hwille he sceal seglian be lande 7 on thæt steorbord him bith ærest Iraland 7 thonne tha igland the sýnd betux Iraland 7 thissum lande, thonne is this land oth he cýmth to Sciringes heale.

south of Sciringes-heale a very great sea falleth upon that land. It is broader than any man may see over. Gotland is opposite on the other side, afterwards Sillende. The sea lieth many hundred miles up in on that land.

“He said, he sailed from Sciringes-heale in five days to that port which men call æt Hethum. It stands between the Winedum and Saxons and Angles, and belongs to Denmark.”¹⁰⁸

“When he thitherward sailed from Sciringes-heale, Denmark was on his bæcboard, and on his steorboard was a wide sea for three days; and then two days before he to Hæthum came, Gotland was on his steorboard, and Sillende and many islands (on those lands the Engle dwelt before they came to this country); and for two days the islands were on his bæcboard that belong to Denmark.”¹⁰⁹

This voyage of Ohthere presents us with an interesting and authentic picture of the manners and political state of a great portion of the north. The next is the voyage of Wulfstan towards the east of the Baltic.

“Wulfstan said, that he went from Hæthum; that he was in Truso in seven days and nights; that the ship was all the way running under sail. Weonothland was to him on the steorboard, and on his bæcboard was Langaland and Leland, and Falster and Sconeg, and all these lands belong to Denmark; and then Burgenda land was to us on the bæcboard, and they have to themselves a king.”¹¹⁰

Wulfstan's
voyage.

¹⁰⁸ Et ealne weg on thæt bæc bord north-wege with suthan thone Sciringes heal fylth swýthe mycel sæ up in on hæst land; seo is bradre thonne ænig man oferseon mæge 7 is Gotland on othere healfe ongean 7 siththa Sillende: seo sæ lith mænig hund mila up in on thæt land 7 of Sciringes heale he cweth tha he seglode on fif dagan to thæm porte the mon hæst æt Hæthum. Se stent betuh Winedum 7 Seaxum 7 Angle 7 hyrth in on Dene.

¹⁰⁹ Tha he thider weard seglode fram Sciringes heale: tha wæs him on thæt bæc-bord Denemearc 7 on thæt steorbord wid sæ

thry dagas 7 tha twegen dagas ær he to Hæthum come, him wæs on thæt steorbord Gotland 7 Sillende 7 Iglanda fela, on thæm landum eardodon Engle ær hi hider on land coman 7 hým wæs tha twegen dagas on thæt bæcbord thæ Igland the in Dene mearce hyrath.

¹¹⁰ Wulfstan sæde tha he gefore of Hæthum thæt he wære on Truso on syfan dagum 7 nihtum; thæt thæt scip wæs ealne weg ýrnende under segle; Weonoth land him wæs on steorbord 7 on bæcbord him wæs Langaland 7 Læland 7 Falster 7 Sconeg 7 thas land eall ýrath to Denemearcan.

“Then after Burgenda land were to us those lands that were called first Blecinga-eg and Meore, and Eowland and Gotland, on bæcboard. These lands belong to Sweon. Weonod land was all the way to us on steorboard to the mouth of the Wisla. The Wisla is a very great river, and towards it lieth Witland and Weonod land. This Witland belongeth to the Estum, and the Wisle flows out of Weonodland, and flows in the East Lake. The East Lake is at least fifteen miles broad.”¹¹

“Then cometh the Ilfing east into the East Lake. Truso stands on the banks of this lake, and the Ilfing cometh out in East Lake, east of Eastlande, together with the Wisla south of Winodland; and then Wisla takes away the name of Ilfing, and tends west of this lake, and north on the sea; therefore men call it the mouth of the Wisla.”¹²

“This Eastland is very large, and there be a great many towns, and in every town there is a king; and there is a great quantity of honey and fish. The king and the richest men drink mare’s milk, and the poor and the slaves drink mead. There be very many battles between them. There is no ale brewed amid the Estum, but there is mead enough.”¹³

“And there is a custom amid the Estum, that when there is a man dead, he lieth within, unburnt, a month amid his relations and friends—sometimes two months; and the kings and the other principal men so much longer, as they have more wealth: sometimes they be half a year unburnt. They

¹¹ Et thonne Burgenda land wæs us on bæcbord 7 tha habbath him sylf cýning. Thonne æfter Burgenda lande wæron us thas land tha sýnd hatene ærest Blecinga eg 7 Meore 7 Eowland 7 Gotland on bæcbord 7 thas land hýrath to Sweon and Weonod land wæs us ealne weg on steorbord oth Wisle muthan; Seo Wisle is swýthe mýcel ea 7 hio to lith Witland 7 Weonod land 7 thæt Witland belimpeth to Estum 7 Seo Wisle lith ut of Weonod lande 7 lith in Estmere 7 se Estmere is huru fiftene mila brad.

¹² Thonne cýmeth Ilfing eastan in Estmere of thæm mere the Truso standeth in

stathe 7 cumath ut samod in Estmere Ilfing eastan of East lande 7 Wistle suthan of Winod lande 7 thonne benimth Wisle Ilfing hire naman 7 ligeth of thæm mere west 7 north on sæ forthý hit man hæf Wisle mutha.

¹³ Thæt Eastland is swýthe mýcel 7 thær bith swýthe manig burh 7 on ælcere býrig bith cýningc 7 thær bith swýthe mýcel hunig 7 fiscath 7 se cýning 7 tha ricostan men drincath mýran meole 7 tha unspedigan 7 tha theowan drincath medo; thær bith swýthe mýcel gewinn betweenan him 7 ne bith thær nænig ealo gebrowen mid Estum ac thær bith medo genoh.

lie above the earth in their house, and all the while that the body is within, there shall be drink and plays until the day that they burn them.¹¹⁴

“Then the same day that they chuse to bear them to the pile, his property that remains after this drink and play is divided into five or six parts, sometimes more, as the proportion of his wealth admits. They lay these along, a mile apart, the greatest portion from the town, then another, then a third, till it be all laid at one mile asunder; and the least part shall be nearest to the town where the dead man lieth.”¹¹⁵

“Then shall be collected all the men that have the swiftest horses in the land, for the way of five miles or six miles from the property. Then run they all together to the property. Then cometh the man that hath the swiftest horse to the first portion and to the greatest, and so on one after the other, till it be all taken away, he taketh the least who is nearest the town, and runs to it; then each rides away with his prize, and may have it all; and because of this the swift horse is inconceivably dear.”¹¹⁶

“And when the wealth is all thus spent, then they bear the man out and burn him, with his weapons and garments. Most frequently all his wealth is spent during the long lying of the dead man within. What they lay by the ways, strangers run for and take it.”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Et thær is mid Estum theaw thonne thær bith man dead thæt he lith inne unforbærned mid his magum 7 freondum monath ge hwilum twegen 7 tha kyingas 7 tha othere heah thungene men swa micle leng swa hi maran speda habbath hwilum healf-gear tha hi beoth unforbærned 7 licgath bufan eorþan on hýra husum 7 ealle tha hwile the thæt lic bith inne thær sceal beon gedrync 7 plega oth thone dæg the hi hinc forbærnath.

¹¹⁵ Thonne thý ylcan dæg hi hine to thæm ade beran wyllath thonne to dælath hi his feoh thæt thær to lafe bith æfter thæm gedrynce thæm plegan on fif oththe sýx hwylum on ma swa swa thæs feos andefn bith. Alecgath hit thonne for hwæga on anre mile thone mæstan dæl fram thæm

tune thonne othere thonne thæne thriddan oth the hýt eall aled bith on thære anre mile 7 sceall beon se læsta dæl nýhst thæm tune the se deada man on lith.

¹¹⁶ Thonne sceolon beon gesamnode ealle tha menn the swýftoste hors habbath on thæm lande for hwæga on fif milum oththe on sýx milum fram thæm feo: thonne ærnath hý ealle toweard thæm feo thonne cýmeth se man se thæt swifte hors hafath to thæm ærestan dæle 7 to thæm mæstan 7 swa ælc æfter othrum oth hit bith eall genumen 7 se nimth thone læstan dæl se nýhst thæm tune thæt feoh geærneth 7 thonne rideth ælc hýs weges mid than feo 7 hýt motan habban eall 7 forthy thær beoth tha swifstan hors ungefoge dyre.

¹¹⁷ And thonne hýs gestreon beoth thus

"This is the custom with the Estum, that the men of every nation shall be burnt; and if a man finds a bone unburnt, it much enrages him. There is with the Estum the power of producing cold, so that there the dead man may lay so long and not be foul; and they make such cold among them, that if any one sets two vessels full of ale or water, they so do that they shall be frozen the same in summer as in winter."¹¹⁸

After such large extracts,¹¹⁹ it may be proper to say no more of the rest of the work than that, in the Anglo-Saxon translation, some chapters are omitted, and others much abbreviated. The royal translator sometimes imitates, rather than translates, the sentiments of his original, and frequently inserts new paragraphs of his own. The last books are much abridged.

Alfred's
translation
of Bede.

His version of Bede,¹²⁰ is also from the Latin to the Anglo-Saxon, and it is recommended to our attention by a most respectable authority. Dr. Hickes, whose memory every friend of Saxon letters will revere, thus speaks of it: "You will pass on to Alfred's paraphrastic translation of Bede's ecclesiastical history. Neither Cæsar nor Cicero ever wrote more perfectly in the middle species of composition."¹²¹

Bede's work is the ecclesiastical history of the Anglo-Saxons,

eall aspended thonne byrth man hine ut 7
forbærneð mid his wæpnum 7 hrægle
7 swithost ealle hys speda hý forspendath
mid than langan lægere thæs deadan mannes
ine 7 thæs the hý be thæm wægum aleggath
the tha fremdan to ærnath 7 nimath.

¹¹⁸ And thæt is mid Estum theaw thæt thær
sceal ælces getheodes man beon forbærned 7
gyf thar man an ban findeth unforbærned hi
hit sceolan miclum gebetan 7 thær is mid
Eastum an mægth thæt hi magon cýle ge-
wyrcean 7 thý thær licgath tha deadan men
swa lange 7 ne fuliath tha hý wyrceath thone
cýle hine on 7 theah man asette twegen fæ-
tels full ealath oththe wæteres hý gedoth tha
other bith oferfrozen sam hit sý sumor, sam
winter.

¹¹⁹ For a commentary on this periplus,
the reader may consult 2 Langbeck's Script.
Dan. p. 106—123, and the notes of Mr.

Foster added to Barrington's Orosius. As
it would occupy too large a portion of this
work to do it justice, I have not attempted
it here.

¹²⁰ It was published formerly by Wheloc,
the professor of Arabic and Saxon, at Cam-
bridge, from three MSS. two at Cambridge,
and one in the Cotton Library; but the best
edition of it is that appended by Smith to
his Latin Bede. Cantab. 1722, with the
various readings, and a few notes.

¹²¹ Prefatio Gram. Anglo-Sax. We have
a curious testimony of Alfred's translation
of Bede in Elfric's Homily on St. Gregory's
birth-day. It says, that "many books speak
of Gregory," and "eac istoria Anglorum tha
the Ælfred cyning of Leden on Englisc
awend." Elstob's Saxon Homily, p. 2. Lond.
1709. Elfric became archbishop of Can-
terbury in 994.

from their invasion of Britain to his own times. Before he begins upon his immediate subject, he sketches lightly the Roman history of Britain, and in this he has inserted many extracts from Orosius and Gildas. He has no charms of style to allure us, no brilliancy of sentiment, no felicity of expression; but he seems to have been an honest, unaffected, well-meaning historian. He has followed the practice of his day in giving place to legends, but they are easily separable from his national facts. His history is of great value, because without it we should have very imperfect information of the transactions of the Anglo-Saxon octarchy.

His life was devoted to learning, and his works are very multifarious. He died in a revered old age, on the 26th of May, 735.¹²² In the Anglo-Saxon translation of this history, many chapters are omitted, some parts are abridged, and some are imitated.

It contains one little fragment of great curiosity. This is a part of the original hymn made by the first Cedmon, the most ancient Saxon poet whose name has descended to us: he died 680. Bede gave the sense of it in Latin:¹²³ Alfred has inserted the Saxon,¹²⁴ which is the earliest specimen of the Anglo-Saxon poetry, and almost of our language, that has descended to us.¹²⁵

The translation of Boetius, by Alfred, was esteemed peculiarly interesting by the Anglo-Saxons.¹²⁶ Boetius flourished at the close of the fifth century, and in the beginning of the sixth. He was the master of the offices¹²⁷ to Theodoric the king of the Goths, who had the discernment to perceive and to commend his intellectual acquisitions.¹²⁸ His master

His translation of Boetius.

¹²² Smith's Bede, p. 803.

¹²³ Bede, l. iv. c. 24.

¹²⁴ Smith's ed. p. 597.

¹²⁵ The laws of Ethelbert in Wilkins' *Leges Anglo-Saxonicae*, p. 1, afford an earlier monument of our language, as this king died 616.

¹²⁶ We learn this from Ethelwerd. He says, speaking of the king's translations,

that he did them so well, "*ut non tantum expertioribus sed et audientibus liber Boetii lachrymosus quodam modo suscitaretur motus*," p. 847.

¹²⁷ See Gibbon on the character, studies, honours, and death of Boetius, iv. p. 33—39.

¹²⁸ The letter of Theodoric to Boetius, full of panegyric on his studies, yet exists. See

at last made him the victim of a political suspicion, and he was killed in prison the 23d of October, 524.¹²⁹

During his confinement he wrote his celebrated book *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*. It is an elaborate attempt to appease the anguish of a mind wounded by adversity. He fancies that Philosophy visits him in his prison, and it is from her eloquent conversation that he is roused to endure his misfortunes. The topics by which feverish discontent is lulled into patient resignation are, the inadequacy of riches, dignity, power, pleasure, or glory, to produce or to perpetuate felicity, a recollection of the uses of adversity, and a statement of the evils which attend the fleeting favours of fortune. The author of existence is then declared to be the sovereign good,¹³⁰ his providence is asserted, and the piece concludes with an earnest recommendation of virtue and devotion.

Boetius was an author esteemed in the time of Alfred as well as since, for Joannes Erigena quotes him with epithets of respect.¹³¹ An Anglo-Saxon version exists of his *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*, which appears fairly to claim Alfred as its author.¹³² This version is praised by its editor for its singular

it in Cassiodorus Var. l. 1, ep. xlv. p. 33, ed. Paris 1600.

¹²⁹ Fabr. Bib. Med. i. p. 687.

¹³⁰ Part of his address to the supreme good, is beautifully translated by our great moralist and critic:—

O qui perpetuâ mundum ratione gubernas,
Terrarum cæli que sator!—
Disjice terrenæ nebulas et pondera molis,
Atque tuo splendore mica! Tu namque serenum,
Tu requies tranquilla piis. Tu cernere finis,
Principium, vector, dux, semita, terminus,
idem.

O Thou, whose power o'er moving worlds
presides,
Whose voice created, and whose wisdom
guides;
On darkling man in pure effulgence shine,
And cheer the clouded mind with light divine,
'Tis thine alone to calm the pious breast
With silent confidence and holy rest;

From thee, great God! we spring, to thee we
tend,

Path, motive, guide, original, and end.

RAMBLER, No. 7.

¹³¹ As p. 31 of his *Divisione Naturæ*, "*Magnifico Boetio summo utriusquæ linguæ philosopho.*" Ib. 34. 113. and 174.

¹³² Besides Ethelwerd, already quoted, Malmsbury affirms, that the king translated Boetius. He says, Asser made the construction easy to him, and the king translated it: "*Asser sensum librorum Boetii de consolatione philosophiæ planioribus verbis enodavit quos ipse rex in Anglicam linguam convertit,*" p. 45 and 248. Henry de Silgrave's MS. Cotton Lib. Cleop. A. 12. p. 15. and Johannes Bever's MS. in Harleian Collection, 641. p. 21. ascribe the translation of Boetius to the king. So the Saxon *Premium* to the work, "*Ælfred Kuning was wealhstod thisse bec 7 and hie of bec Ledene on Englisc wende.*" Bromton must

smoothness and majesty.¹³³ In the Bodleian MSS. the metre of Boetius is translated into prose; in the Cotton MSS. it is rendered into Anglo-Saxon verse.¹³⁴ The editor ascribes both to Alfred; and he thinks the prose was written when the king was agitated by his difficulties—the verse, when he enjoyed the leisure he coveted. He thinks the poetry distinguished with superior excellence from the prose, though it does not reach the sublimity of Cædmon.¹³⁵ In executing his translation, the king does not endeavour to be literal. The Præmium says, he sometimes renders word for word, and sometimes he only aims to convey the meaning of the author.¹³⁶ He occasionally, as in his Orosius, inserts something of his own. Thus he begins it by a little history piece of the exile and imprisonment of Boetius. In the rest he liberally paraphrases.¹³⁷

In applying his valuable leisure to these three works, Alfred deserved the gratitude of his country. They were all important. Orosius opened to the Anglo-Saxons the anterior history of the world they inhabited, and was therefore peculiarly calculated to check their barbarous prejudices, and to enlarge their contracted minds. Bede was also worthy of their notice, as the historian of their country. Boetius did honour to Alfred's taste,¹³⁸ and could not but be beneficial to his people, in displaying to their notice associations of moral

therefore err in giving the translation to the bishop Wæfrith. Asser, Florence, Ingulf, and Higden, who mention Wæfrith's translation of Gregory's Dialogues, do not ascribe Boetius to him.

¹³³ Translationis hujus suavitate singulari ac majestate vere regia ductus. Rawlinson's ed. Oxon. 1698.

¹³⁴ Dr. Hickes praises these verses for the purity of their Saxon. He says, they scarcely contain a word, a soluta oratione abhorrens; whereas the Danish Saxon often exhibits barbarisms. Gram. Anglo-Sax. 177.

¹³⁵ See Rawlinson's address to the reader, prefixed.

¹³⁶ Hwylum he sette word be worde, hwylum andgit of andgite. Præm.

¹³⁷ Rawlinson.

¹³⁸ Gibbon calls the book "a golden volume, not unworthy of the leisure of Plato or Tully;" he adds, that it "claims incomparable merit, from the barbarism of the times, and the situation of the author." Hist. iv. p. 38. In the Cotton Library, Otho, A. 6. is a MS. of the Anglo-Saxon translation, which is of such antiquity, that Wanley thinks it was written in the king's lifetime, or soon afterwards. "Quo vivente aut saltem paulo post obitum ejus hunc cod. scriptum credo." From this MS. he says, Junius took the readings, varying from the Bodleian copy. Ant. Lit. Sept. Thesaurus, pars altera, p. 217.

BOOK
XII.

thoughts, and encomiums on intellectual pursuits, which were well adapted to kindle their emulation, and to give to literature a popular charm. But as to two other works, the *Pastoralis Cura*, and the *Dialogues* of Gregory, of which the king translated the first, and ordered the performance of the other, the intelligent reader must hesitate before he applauds. The *Pastorals* of Gregory have very dubious merit, but his *Dialogues* must be consigned to general contempt.

His translation of Gregory's *Pastorals*.

Gregory, the pope, whose activity produced the conversion of England to Christianity, was a man of very zealous piety and superior understanding. He possessed a strong but not an enlarged mind. It was fettered by the ignorance, and perverted by the prejudices of his age. His exertions were the offspring of his sense of duty, and he maintained a correspondence with almost every part of Europe and Asia. His theology was not the dictate of rational and enlightened religion, but of bigotry, habit, and barbarous superstition.¹³⁹

The conversion of England by the monks he sent, gave the Anglo-Saxons a peculiar interest in his name, regulations, and compositions. Every churchman held him up to respect, and every layman heard his tenets with admiration.¹⁴⁰

The *Liber Pastoralis Curæ* is one of the most elaborate schemes to influence and govern the human mind, which ingenuity has devised. The life and writings of Gregory evince that enthusiasm, that self-mortification, that sincerity in his zeal, which exempt him from the imputation of those interested views which his composition tends so powerfully to promote. It is probable that he in the writing, as Alfred in the translation, meant nothing but the diffusion of Christianity, and the amendment of mankind; but with all these good intentions, he transmitted to a well-organized, commu-

¹³⁹ The edition of his works which I have, is that of Paris, 1640. They consist of six volumes bound up into two folios, unusually thick, and large sized.

¹⁴⁰ Fulco, in his letter to Alfred, names

Gregory as the Anglo-Saxon apostle. "Beato Gregorio apostolo vestro," p. 124. So Elfric, in his *Saxon Homily* on the pope, says, "He is rihtlice Engliscere theode apostol," p. 2.

nicating, and widely disseminated order, a series of counsels, the tendency of which was to rule the mass of mankind, by nicely affecting all the springs of human action.

His avowed object is to teach a bishop all the qualifications he should possess, and the conduct he should pursue. He divides his subject into four parts: in the first, he endeavours to stimulate his pupils to make themselves skilful in their office. He declares it to be great rashness for men not skilled to assume the pastoral duty, because the "regimen animarum," the governing of souls, is the art of arts.¹⁴¹ He takes a review of the characters who aim at the office from worldly motives, and he is laudably anxious that those only should possess it who will fulfil its duties.¹⁴²

In the second part he details the qualities which the bishop should possess: he should be pure in thought, the chief in action, discreetly silent, and prudently zealous; connected with all in sympathy, detached from all in contemplation, humble to the good, authoritative to delinquents, not too much devoted to exterior prudence, nor too indifferent to it; he should be sagaciously watchful not to desire to please men too much, and yet should study to make himself loved.¹⁴³ He says, vices should sometimes be prudently dissembled, though judged; sometimes openly known, and maturely tolerated; sometimes subtilely and secretly examined; sometimes mildly reprehended, and sometimes fiercely reproached.¹⁴⁴

The third part is a master-piece of human art. In this the mind of Gregory contemplates all the varieties of human characters and conditions, reviews the various means by which they may be affected, and lays down the rules by which every

¹⁴¹ Quoniam ars est artium regimen animarum. Greg. Pastor. l. i. c. i. tom. 3. p. 158.

¹⁴² Past. p. 158—166.

¹⁴³ These topics are the subject of the different chapters of the second book, 166—181.

¹⁴⁴ Sciendum quoque est quod aliquando

subjectorum vitia, prudenter dissimulanda sunt sed quia dissimulantur judicanda: aliquando et asserte cognita, mature toleranda, aliquando vero subtiliter et occultè perscrutanda, aliquando leniter arguenda aliquando autem vehementer increpanda. Pars. 2. c. x. p. 177.

difference of temper may be bent and swayed to the wishes of the churchman. It is this part which is peculiarly fitted to throw mankind into chains, because it organizes a system the most sagacious, which shall invisibly govern every individual by appropriate springs. Such a system, in the hand of impassive and undeviating virtue, would conduce to good; but committed to the use of human agents, perpetually misled by selfishness and passions, it must have contributed to fabricate and maintain that resistless despotism which for ages enchained and depraved Europe.

In this part he lays down rules for the management of the respective sexes;¹⁴⁵ of youth and age, of poor and rich, the cheerful and the sad, the powerful and the subject, the lord and the slave.¹⁴⁶

Aware that every disposition requires a peculiar treatment, he distinguishes between the conduct that should be observed towards the wise and the ignorant, the impudent and the bashful, the obstinate and the pusillanimous, the irritable and the patient.¹⁴⁷

He enforces one system of behaviour towards the benevolent, another towards the envious, the innocent and the impure, the healthy and the sick; those who dread correction, and those who despise it; the silent and the loquacious, the slothful and the ardent, the irascible and the meek, are to be managed by the particular rules adapted to each disposition, which he here details.¹⁴⁸

His enumeration of the various shades of human character is not yet exhausted, and he continues to state the provisions by which the clerical influence may be secured over each. The humble and the proud, the pertinacious and the capricious, the gluttonous and the abstinent, the man of pity and the man of violence, they who neither desire another's pro-

¹⁴⁵ Thus "men must be enjoined great, and women small things, that the one may be soothed, and the other kept exercised."

¹⁴⁶ Greg. Pastor. 181—186.

¹⁴⁷ Ib. 186—189.

¹⁴⁸ Ib. 189—199.

perty nor give away their own, and they who give what they have and yet seize another's, the quarrelsome and the peaceful, he who fomented discord and he who appeases it; all these are separately reviewed, and carefully provided for.¹⁴⁹

After these, he considers men in the different situations of prosperity and adversity; in the married and the single state; as sinful and as ignorant of sin; those who err in thought and those who offend in conduct. He pursues the various degrees of vice and penitence.¹⁵⁰

He says, the *præsul animarum*, the governor of souls, will take care, in the diversity of his preaching, to apply solicitously medicines adapted to the wounds of each individual. He admits that it will require great study and labour to exert this individual management; but he says, it will demand greater in their public and general addresses, to accommodate them at the same time to all the diversities of passion which may then be assembled, to watch the hidden motions and springs of action of each, and, like wrestlers, to bend to every side; sometimes the smaller vices must be let alone that the greater may be attacked, and the weak minds must be humoured by not being roused beyond their strength.¹⁵¹

His fourth part is a short chapter, exhorting the preacher, after having acted upon others, to be careful of himself.¹⁵²

This treatise was in such repute, that the Council of Toledo directed it to be studied by all bishops. A subsequent synod, in decreeing the parts of ecclesiastic discipline, refers to this book.¹⁵³

It is but justice to remark, that many moral counsels and provisions are interwoven with these subjects; and that in all human probability Gregory meant that the whole should be applied to the spiritual reformation of the world; but it is certain, that in teaching his church governor to be so curious in investigating the foibles of humanity, and the changes of our

¹⁴⁹ Greg. Pastor. p. 199—208.

¹⁵⁰ Ib. 201—225.

¹⁵¹ Greg. Pastor. 226—228.

¹⁵² Ib. 229.

¹⁵³ Ib. 155.

caprice, so to study our weaknesses and tempers as to acquire the power of managing them to his wish, he was making not a religious preceptor, but an ecclesiastical politician. Accustoming him thus to penetrate and to influence the peculiar springs of human action, he gives him a practised mastery over the minds of others, which no good man will desire, because no one can ever innocently exercise. He who is learned in our follies will convert his knowledge to his own benefit: he learns to undervalue mankind, and to make religion a politician's art.

The honourable mind of Alfred, swayed by his mental tutors and his religious feelings, was not aware of the perversion to which the precepts of Gregory were liable. He saw his clergy ignorant and indolent,¹⁵⁴ and, wishing them to be made active, and to take an interest in their duty, and to see his people better Christians, he translated this work.¹⁵⁵

Gregory's
Dialogues.

But however we may estimate the pastoral exhortation of Gregory, there can be no difference of opinion as to his Dialogues. That imbecility of thought which credulous fanaticism generates even in valuable minds, never left a more absurd monument of its perversion than the Dialogues of Gregory, which, at the request of Alfred, were translated by Wenefrith into Anglo-Saxon. Whatever human frenzy, in its wildest flights, has believed or communicated, may be here paralleled by a kindred folly. The piety which pervades the composition is entitled to our praise, for its intention; but piety,

¹⁵⁴ Alfred complained of this to Fulco, as we find by the archbishop's answer, "Et ecclesiasticus ordo (qui in multis, *ut dicitis*, sive frequenti inruptione vel impugnatione paganorum, seu vetustate temporum vel incuria praelatorum vel ignorantia subditorum conlapsus est.)" Epist. Fulconis, p. 124.

¹⁵⁵ In the Cotton Library, Tiberius, B. 11. was a MS. of this Anglo-Saxon version, in which a note expressed, that it was the copy which Plegmund had possessed; though this may be doubted, yet the antiquity of

the MS. seems to reach his time. "Codex ipse, manu largiori, laxiori elegantiori et sæculo Ælfrediano plane convenienti, exaratur in usum forte cujusdam Magnatis, seu regie stirpis principis." Wanley's Catal. Ant. Thes. p. 217. This MS. has nearly perished in the fire which injured the Cotton Library: of 211 leaves, thirty-two only were found after it, and these useless. Another MS. copy, in the most ancient style of Saxon writing, is in the Bodleian Library, Hatton, 88. Wanley, p. 70.

allied with nonsense or with falsehood, only degrades the tremendous Being whom it professes to extol. He, whose wisdom is the most perfect intelligence, whose creations display a sagacity as comprehensive as space, and as varied as the countless objects which are in it, should be adored with our purest reason, with our sublimest knowledge. How then can we dare to connect his operations, and to pledge his sacred name, to the false dreams of our folly!

The Dialogues are recitals of the miracles achieved in Italy by the natives of that country. Gregory professes that he shall only relate what he himself has known concerning perfect and approved men, or what he has received from the attestations of good and faithful persons. One hundred and sixteen pages then follow of the most incredible legends with which superstition ever insulted the common sense of mankind.

But let us not triumph too exultingly over our ancestors. Our knowledge, which has enabled us to detect and to condemn these impostures, has not been of our own formation; it has been the slowly-formed creature of many centuries. We are now proud and wise with the experience, thought, reading, comparison, and sagacity of a thousand additional years. In the days of Alfred, credulity was inevitable, because history and learning were every where in such ruins that reason had no basis, no solid ground from which her energies could act. It had not then been determined what was true or what was false in history, geography, philology, or philosophy. Criticism had not at that time received her birth, and therefore the human mind could only hear, wonder, and indiscriminately believe.

In the Cotton Library there is an Anglo-Saxon MS. of some selections from St. Austin's soliloquies,¹⁵⁶ or, as the MS

Alfred's selections from
St. Austin.

¹⁵⁶ It is in Vitellius, A. 15. After three pages of preface, it say, "Agustinus Cartama bisceop worhte swa bæc be his egnum gethance; tha bæc sint gehatene soliliquiorum tha is be modes fineaunge 7 treounga."

BOOK
XII.

expresses it, "The gathering of the flowers,"¹⁵⁷ from St. Austin's work. At the end of these flowers is this imperfect sentence, "Here end the sayings that king Alfred selected from those books that we call —".¹⁵⁸ Here the MS. terminates.

His Psalter.

Malmsbury mentions, that Alfred began to translate the Hymns of David, but that he had hardly finished the first part when he died.¹⁵⁹ There are many MSS. of the Anglo-Saxon translation of the Psalter extant,¹⁶⁰ but it is not in our power to discriminate the performance of Alfred.

His Æsop.

In the Harleian Library there is a MS. of a translation of fables, styled Æsop's, into French romance verse. At the conclusion of her work, the author¹⁶¹ asserts that Alfred the king translated the fables from the Latin into English, from which version she turned them into French verse.¹⁶² Mary,

¹⁵⁷ Thus p. 41. Er endiath tha blostman thære forman bocum— er onginth seo gadorung thære blostme thære æfternan bæc.

¹⁵⁸ Ær endiath tha cwidas the Elfred Kining altes of thære bæc the we hatath on—MS. p. 56. Wanley says of this MS. "Tractatus iste quondam fuit ecclesiæ, B. Mariæ de Suwika ut patet ex fol. 2. literis Normonno-Saxonicis post conquestum scriptus," p. 218. A transcript of this MS. made by Junius, is in the Bodleian Library, Jun. 70, and this has the same abrupt ending. Wanley, 96.

¹⁵⁹ Psalterium transferre aggressus vix prima parte explicata vivendi finem fecit. Malmsb. 45.

¹⁶⁰ Wanley says, p. 182. there is a MS. very elegantly written about the time of Ethelstan, which contains Jerome's Latin Psalter, with an interlineary Saxon version, in the King's Library. There is another interlineary version in the Cotton Library, Vesp. A. 1. written 1,000 years ago, very elegantly, in capital letters. Wanley, 222. There is another, written before the conquest, in Tiberius, C. 6. p. 234. This contains many figures of musical instruments,

alleged to be Jewish, and several coloured drawings on religious subjects. There is another interlineary version in the Lambeth Library, written in Edgar's reign, or a little before, which contains the curious and valuable addition of ancient musical notes. Wanley, 268.

¹⁶¹ This author was Mary, an Anglo-Norman poetess. She states herself to have been born in France, and she seems to have visited England. The thirteenth volume of the *Archæologia*, published by the Antiquarian Society, contains a dissertation upon her life and writings, by the Abbé La Rue, p. 36—67.

¹⁶² Mary's words are:

" Por amur le cunte Willame
Le plus vaillant de nul realme
Meinteneur de cest livre feire
E del Engleis en romans treire
Æsope apelum cest livre
Qu'il translata e fist escrire
Del griu en Latin le turna
Li reis Alurez qui mut lama
Le translata puis en Engleis.
E ieo lai rimee en Franceis."

Harl. MS. 978. p. 87.

the French translator, lived in the thirteenth century. The evidence of her assertion, as to Alfred being the English translator of the fables, can certainly only have the force of her individual belief; and as this belief may have been merely founded on popular tradition, it cannot be considered as decisive evidence. Such an assertion and belief, however, of an authoress of the thirteenth century, must be allowed to have so much weight as to be intitled to notice here.¹⁶³ The completest MS. of Mary's translation, contains an hundred and four fables, out of which thirty-one only are Æsop's.¹⁶⁴

In the century which succeeded Alfred, the most informed scholar was Dunstan, whose life has been already given.¹⁶⁵ Abbo deserves notice, for his life of St. Edmund, in which Virgil and Horace are quoted.¹⁶⁶ But, not to occupy the reader with the names of obscure men, we will dismiss this part of our subject with a short account of Elfric, to whose labours, in the tenth century, our countrymen at large were much indebted, as his literary efforts were chiefly directed to make learning popular, by transferring it to the vernacular tongue.

Of the three Elfrics who are said to have existed in this century and the next, we shall only notice the author of the Translations. Very little is known of him accurately; and

Elfric.

¹⁶³ Mons. La Rue thinks, that Alfred was not the author of the English translation which Mary used. His reasons are by no means conclusive: 1st. Asser mentions no translations of Alfred's, and therefore his omission of Æsop is of no consequence. 2d. Though Malmsbury does not particularize Æsop among the translations he enumerates, this argument is indecisive, because Malmsbury expressly states, that the king translated more books than those which he enumerates. His words are "*Denique plurimam partem Romanæ Bibliothecæ Anglorum auribus dedit,—cujus præcipui sunt libri Orosius,*" &c. Malmsbury only names the chief of his translations; a monk would have hardly ranked Æsop in this

honourable class. 3d. The abbé's most forcible doubt is, whether Mary could in the thirteenth century have understood Alfred's language. But this is not certain, and it is highly probable that a Saxon version, of such a popular book as Æsop, would have been modernized, as its language became obsolete, just as we have modernized Chaucer. 4th. As to the feudal expressions which Mary uses, as we have not the English MSS. which she translated, and therefore cannot know what were the actual expressions in that, I think no argument can be rested on them.

¹⁶⁴ Archæologia, p. 53.

¹⁶⁵ See first vol. of this Hist. p. 376.

¹⁶⁶ lb. p. 235.

therefore we shall only cite a few circumstances from his own prefaces and dedications.

He addresses his translation of the book of Genesis to the Ealdorman Æthelweard, who, he tells us, had requested him to translate it into English as far as the history of Isaac, from which period some other person had made a version of it before his time. The address begins, "Elfric, monk, humbly
"greet the Ealdorman Æthelweard."¹⁶⁷

He calls himself sometimes monk, and sometimes monk and mass priest,¹⁶⁸ and sometimes abbot.¹⁶⁹ He describes himself as the alumnus of Athelwold, the bishop of Winchester, in Edgar's reign.¹⁷⁰ He sometimes addresses the Archbishop Sigeric,¹⁷¹ and sometimes the Archbishop Wulstan;¹⁷² the one of York, the other of Canterbury. In one preface he says he was sent "in the days of Æthelred the king, on the death
"of Athelwold, by the Bishop Elfeage, to a monastery called
"Cernel, at the request of the Thegn Æthelmer." From the mention of these persons, it is obvious that he was born before the reign of Ethelred, and flourished both during it and beyond it. He composed or translated many homilies and lives of saints, and religious treatises. We have his Glossary, and Colloquies of Latin and Saxon; his Excerpta from the Latin Grammarians and from Bede; and his translations from the Scriptures. These yet exist in MS. in our public libraries.¹⁷³

We must admire, in all his performances, his good intentions, his piety, his industry, and his utility; but we shall find very little intellectual eminence to appreciate.

Adelhard and Bridferth, the biographers of Dunstan, have been already noticed in our preceding volumes. The sermons of Bishop Lupus, and the history of Ethelwerd, have also been mentioned. They all belong to the latter part of the Anglo-Saxon period.

¹⁶⁷ Pref. to Thwaites' Heptateuch.

¹⁶⁸ MS. B. P. Cant. Wanley, 153.

¹⁶⁹ MS. C. C. C. Cant. K. 2. Bib. Bod.
Wanl. p. 22.

¹⁷⁰ MS. Wanley, 153.

¹⁷¹ Ib. 156.

¹⁷² Ib. 22. 58.

¹⁷³ A long list of them may be found in Wanley's Catalogue.

It would carry us beyond the limits allotted to this history, to give a minute detail of the various chronicles which our ancestors composed before the Norman Conquest for preserving the most important of the public events, or to detail the many Saxon treatises which were written on religious and other subjects. The curious reader will find them carefully catalogued by Wanley, in his Appendix to Hickes's Thesaurus.

CHAP. V.

*The Arts and Sciences of the Anglo-Saxons.*BOOK
XII.

Their Music.

THE art of Music has been as universal as poetry; but, like poetry, has every where existed in different degrees of refinement. Among rude nations, it is in a rude and noisy state. Among the more civilized, it has attained all the excellence which science, taste, feeling, and delicate organization can give.

We derive the greatest portion of our most interesting music from harmony of parts; and we attain all the variety of expression and scientific combination which are familiar to us, by the happy use of our musical notation. The ancients were deficient in both these respects. They had no harmony of parts, and therefore all their instruments and voices were in unison; and so miserable was their notation, that it has been contended by the learned, with every appearance of truth, that they had no other method of marking time than by the quantity of the syllables of the words placed over the notes.

Saint Jerom might therefore well say on music, “Unless they are retained by the memory sounds perish, because they cannot be written.”¹

The ancients, so late as the days of Cassiodorus, or the sixth century, used three sorts of musical instruments, which he calls the percussionalia, the tensibilia, and the inflatila. The percussionalia were silver or brazen dishes, or such things as, when struck with some force, yielded a sweet ringing. The tensibilia he describes to have consisted of chords, tied

¹ Jerom ad Dard. de Mus. Instr.—Guido, by his discovery of our musical notation, removed this complaint.

with art, which, on being struck with a plectrum, soothed the ear with a delightful sound, as the various kinds of cytharæ. The inflatila were wind-instruments, as tubæ, calami, organa, panduria, and such like.²

The Anglo-Saxons had the instruments of chords, and wind-instruments.

In the drawings on their MSS. we see the horn, trumpet, flute, and harp, and a kind of lyre of four strings, struck by a plectrum.

In one MS. we see a musician striking the four-stringed lyre, while another is accompanying him with two flutes, into which he is blowing at the same time.³

In the MSS. which exhibit David and three musicians playing together, David has a harp of eleven strings, which he holds with his left hand while he plays with his right fingers; another is playing on a violin or guitar of four strings with a bow; another blows a short trumpet, supported in the middle by a pole, while another blows a curved horn.⁴ This was probably the representation of an Anglo-Saxon concert.

The chord instrument like a violin was perhaps that to which a disciple of Bede alludes, when he expresses how delighted he should be to have "a player who could play on the cithara, which we call rotæ."⁵

Of the harp, Bede mentions, that in all festive companies it was handed round, that every one might sing in turn.⁶ It must have therefore been in very common use.

Dunstan is also described by his biographer to have carried with him to a house his cythara, "which in our language we call hearpan."⁷ He hung it against the wall, and one of the strings happening to sound untouched, it was esteemed a miracle.

² Cassiod. Op. 2. p. 507.

³ MS. Cott. Cleop. C. 8.

⁴ MS. Cott. Tib. C. 6.

⁵ 16 Mag. Bib. p. 88. Snorre calls the

musicians in the court of an ancient king of Sweden "Leckara, Harpara, Gigiara, Fid-lara." Yng. Saga. c. 25. p. 30.

⁶ Bede, l. iv. c. 24.

⁷ MS. Cleop.

The organ was in use among the Anglo-Saxons. Cassiodorus and Fortunatus mention the word organ as a musical instrument, but it has been thought to have been a collection of tubes blowed into by the human breath. Muratori has contended that the art of making organs like ours was known in the eighth century only to the Greeks; that the first organ in Europe was the one sent to Pepin from Greece in 756, and that it was in 826 that a Venetian priest, who had discovered the secret, brought it into France.⁸

A passage which I have observed in Aldhelm's poem, *De Laude Virginum*, entirely overthrows these theories; for he, who died in 709, and who never went to Greece, describes them in a manner which shews that he was acquainted with great organs made on the same principle as our own:

*Maxima millenis auscultans organa flabris
Mulceat auditum ventosis follibus iste
Quamlibet auratis fulgescant cætera capsis.*⁹

This is literally, "Listening to the greatest organs with a thousand blasts, the ear is soothed by the windy bellows, while the rest shines in the gilt chests."

Dunstan, great in all the knowledge of his day, as well as in his ambition, is described to have made an organ of brass pipes, elaborated by musical measures, and filled with air from the bellows.¹⁰ The bells he made have been mentioned before. About the same time we have the description of an organ made in the church at Ramsey. "The earl devoted thirty pounds to make the copper pipes of organs, which, resting with their openings in thick order on the spiral winding in the inside, and being struck on feast days with the strong blast of bellows, emit a sweet melody and a far-resounding peal."¹¹

In 669, Theodore and Adrian, who planted learning among the Anglo-Saxons, also introduced into Kent the ecclesiastical

⁸ Murat. de Art. Ital. ii. p. 357.

⁹ 13 Max. Bib. Pat. 3.

¹⁰ 3. Gale, 366.

¹¹ Ibid. 420.

chanting, which Gregory the Great had much improved. From Kent it was carried into the other English churches. In 678 one John came also from Rome, and taught in his monastery the Roman mode of singing, and was directed by the pope to diffuse it amongst the rest of the clergy, and left written directions to perpetuate it. Under his auspices it became a popular study in the Saxon monasteries.¹²

We have a pleasing proof of the impressive effect of the sacred music of the monks, in the little poem which Canute the Great made upon it. As the monarch, with his queen and courtiers, were approaching Ely, the monks were at their devotions. The king, attracted by the melody, ordered his rowers to approach it, and to move gently while he listened to the sounds which came floating through the air from the church on the high rock before him. He was so delighted by the effect, that he made a poem on the occasion, of which the first stanza only has come down to us.¹³

There are many ancient MSS. of the Anglo-Saxon times, which contain musical notes.

The musical talents of Alfred and Anlaf have been noticed in this history; an ardent commendation of the art is made by Bede.¹⁴

The progress of the Anglo-Saxons in the art of design and painting was not very considerable. The talents of their artists varied. The numerous coloured drawings of plants to the Herbarium of Apuleius have merit for the time; but the animals in the same MS. are indifferent.¹⁵ There are also coloured drawings of the things fabled to be in the East, in two MSS.¹⁶ The drawings to Cædmon shew little skill.¹⁷ Many MSS. have the decorations of figures; as the Saxon Calendar, the Gospels, Psalters, and others.¹⁸ The account

Their
Painting.

¹² See Bede, iv. 2. 18; v. 22.

¹³ See before, p. 288.

¹⁴ Op. Bede, i. p. 353. See it translated in Dr. Henry's History, iv. p. 187.

¹⁵ Cott. Lib. MSS. Vitel. C. 3.

¹⁶ MS. Tib. B. 5.

¹⁷ Cott. MSS.

¹⁸ Ibid.

of the stars, from Cicero's translation of Aratus, contains some very elegant images.¹⁹ A portrait of Dunstan is attempted in one MS.²⁰ They all exhibit hard outlines.

Rome, the great fountain of literature, art, and science, to all the west of Europe, in these barbarous ages, furnished England with her productions in this art. Augustin brought with him from Rome a picture of Christ; and Benedict, in 678, imported from Rome pictures of the Virgin, and of the twelve Apostles, some of the histories in the Evangelists, and some from the subjects in the Apocalypse. These were placed in different parts of the church. In 685 he obtained new supplies of the graphic art. Bede calls them pictures from the Old and New Testament, "executed with wonderful art and wisdom." He mentions four of these, which were believed to have a typical concordance. The picture of Isaac carrying the wood on which he was to be sacrificed, was placed near the representation of Christ carrying his cross. So the Serpent exalted by Moses was approximated to the Crucifixion.²¹

Dunstan excelled in this as in the other arts. He is stated to have diligently cultivated the art of painting, and to have painted for a lady a robe, which she afterwards embroidered.²² There is a drawing of Christ, with himself kneeling at his feet, of his own performance, in the Bodleian Library.²³

The Anglo-Saxons were fond of beautifying their MSS. with drawings with ink of various colours, coloured parchment, and sometimes with gilt letters. The Gospels, Nero, D. 4. exhibit a splendid instance of these ornaments. The Franco-theotisc Gospels, Calig. A. 7. are also highly decorated. Many Saxon MSS. in the Cotton Library exhibit very expensive, and what in those days were thought beautiful, illuminations. The art of doing these ornaments has been

¹⁹ MS. Cal. A. 7. Tib. B. 5. Nero, D. 4.

²⁰ MS. Claud. A. 3.

²¹ Bede Abb. Wer. 295. 297.

²² MS. Cleop. B. 13.

²³ Hickes, p. 144.

long in disuse; but some of the recipes for the materials have been preserved.

They prepared their parchment by this rule: "Put it under lime, and let it lie for three days; then stretch it, scrape it well on both sides, and dry it, and then stain it with the colours you wish."²⁴

To gild their skins, we have these directions: "Take the red skin and carefully pumice it, and temper it in tepid water, and pour the water on it till it runs off limpid. Stretch it afterwards, and smooth it diligently with clean wood. When it is dry, take the whites of eggs, and smear it therewith thoroughly; when it is dry, sponge it with water, press it, dry it again and polish it; then rub it with a clean skin, and polish it again, and gild it."²⁵

The receipts for their gold writing will be mentioned in the chapter on their sciences.

Of their sculpture and engraving we know little. Their rings and ornamented horns, and the jewel of Alfred, found in the isle of Athelney,²⁶ shew that they knew the art of engraving on metals and other substances with much neatness of mechanical execution, though with little taste or design.

That the Anglo-Saxons had some sort of architecture in use before they invaded Britain cannot be doubted, if we recollect that every other circumstance about them attests that they were by no means in the state of absolute barbarism. They lived in edifices, and worshipped in temples raised by their own skill. The temple which Charlemagne destroyed at Eresberg, in the 8th century, is described in terms which imply at least greatness; and if we consult their language we shall find that they had indigenous expressions concerning their buildings, which is evidence that the things which they designate were in familiar use.²⁷

Their
Architecture

²⁴ Muratori, t. ii. p. 370.

²⁵ Ibid. p. 376.

²⁶ See Hickes's Thesaurus.

²⁷ Their term for window is rather curious; it is *ehthyrl*, literally an eye-hole.

The verb which they commonly used when they spoke of building, satisfactorily shews us that their ancient erections were of wood. It is *getymbrian*, 'to make of wood.' Where Bede says of any one that he built a monastery or a church, Alfred translates it *getimbrade*. So appropriated was the word to building, that even when they became accustomed to stone edifices they still retained it, though, when considered as to its original meaning, it then expressed an absurdity; for the Saxon Chronicle says of a person, that he promised to *getembrian* a church of stone,²⁸ which literally would imply that he made of wood a stone church. Alfred uses it in the same manner.

The first Saxon churches of our island were all built of wood.²⁹ The first church in Northumbria was built of wood. So the one of Holy Island.³⁰ The church at Durham was built of split oak, and covered with reeds like those of the Scots.³¹ In Greensted church in Essex, the most ancient part, the nave or body of this church, was entirely composed of the trunks of large oaks split, and rough hewed on both sides. They were set upright and close to each other, being let into a sill at the bottom, and a plate at the top, where they were fastened with wooden pins. "This," says Ducarel, "was the whole of the original church, which yet remains entire, though much corroded and worn by length of time. It is 29 feet 9 inches long, and 5 feet 6 inches high on the sides, which supported the primitive roof."³²

Remains of Roman architecture have been found in various parts of England. In Mr. Carter's *Ancient Architecture of England*, and in the publication of Mr. Lysons, may be seen several fragments of a Roman temple and other buildings lately dug up at Bath; which shew that our ancestors, when they settled in England, had very striking specimens of Roman architecture before them, which must have taught them to

²⁸ Sax. Chron. p. 28.

²⁹ Bede, iii. 4.

³² Ducarel's *Anglo-Norman Antiquities*,

³⁰ Bede, iii. 25.

³¹ Ib.

p. 100.

despise their own rude performances, and to wish to imitate nobler models.

The circles of stones which are found in Cornwall, Oxfordshire, and Derbyshire, as well as the similar ones in Westphalia, Brunswick, and Alsatia, which Keysler mentions,³³ shew rather the absence than the knowledge of architectural science. They are placed by mere strength, without skill; they prove labour and caprice, but no art.

Stonehenge is certainly a performance which exhibits more workmanship and contrivance. The stones of the first and third circles have tenons which fit to mortises in the stones incumbent. They are also shaped, though into mere simple upright stones, and the circles they describe have considerable regularity. But as it is far more probable that they were raised by the ancient Britons than by Anglo-Saxons, they need not be argued upon here.

If the Roman buildings extant in Britain had been insufficient to improve the taste, and excite the emulation of the Saxons, yet the arrival of the Roman clergy, which occurred in the 7th century, must have contributed to this effect.

It is true, that architecture as well as all the arts declined, even at Rome, after the irruption of the barbarians. It is however a just opinion of Muratori,³⁴ that the arts, whose exercise is necessary to life, could never utterly perish. To build houses for domestic convenience, and places, however rude, for religious worship, exacted some contrivance. But there is a great distinction between the edifices of necessity, and those of cultivated art. Strong walls, well-covered roofs, and a division of apartments; whatever simple thought, profuse expence, and great labour could produce, appeared in all parts of Europe during the barbarian ages: but symmetry and right disposition of parts, the plans of elegant convenience, of beauty and tasteful ornament, were unknown to both

³³ Antiq. Septent. p. 5—10.

³⁴ De Art. Ital. t. ii. p. 353.

Roman and Saxon architects, from the 6th century to very recent periods.

But if the science and practice of Roman and Grecian architecture declined at Rome, with its political empire, and the erections of barbarian ignorance and barbarian taste appeared instead; the effect, which we are to expect would result from our ancestors becoming acquainted with the Roman models, was rather a desire for great and striking architecture, than an exact imitation of the beauty they admired. Correct and elegant architecture requires that the mind of the designer and superintendant should be cultivated with a peculiar degree of geometrical science and general taste. Masons capable of executing whatever genius may conceive, are not alone sufficient. Of these there must have been no want, in the most barbarous ages of Europe. They who could raise the stupendous monasteries and cathedrals which we read of or have seen, could have equally reared the more elegant buildings of ancient art, if an architect had existed who could have given their labour and ingenuity the requisite direction. A Wren, or a Vitruvius was wanted, not able workmen. The disciplined mind and cultured taste, not the manual dexterity.

The arts of life are found to flourish in proportion as their productions are valued and required. When the Anglo-Saxons became converted to Christianity, they wanted monasteries and churches. And this demand for architectural ability would have produced great perfection in the art, if the state of the other arts and sciences had permitted a due cultivation of genius in this; but no single art can attain perfection if every other be neglected, or if general ignorance enfeeble and darken the mind. Patronage therefore, though it called forth whatever mechanical labour and barbarian taste could fabricate, could not miraculously create taste and regular science. The love of sublimity is more congenial to the rude heroism of infant civilization, and therefore our ancient archi-

ecture often reached to the sublime; but while we admire its vastness, its solidity, and its magnificence, we smile at its irregularities, its discordancies, and its caprice.

CHAP.

V.

The chief peculiarities of the Anglo-Saxon architecture, of which several specimens, though in fragments, exist, are declared to be a want of uniformity of parts, massy columns, semicircular arches, and diagonal mouldings.³⁵ Of these the two first are common to all the barbarous architecture of Europe. But the semicircular arches and diagonal mouldings seem to have been more peculiar additions to the Saxon building.

That the round arches were borrowed from Roman buildings, is the prevailing sentiment. It is at least a fact, that the Saxons must have seen them among the numerous specimens of the imperial architecture which they found in England.

The universal diagonal ornament, or zig-zag moulding, which is a very distinguishing trait of the Saxon architecture, is found disposed in two ways; one with its point projecting outwards, and the other with its point lying so as to follow the lines which circumscribe it, either horizontal, perpendicular, or circular.³⁶

On this singular ornament an etymological remark may be hazarded, as it may tend to elucidate its origin. The Saxon word used to denote the adorning of a building is *gefrætwian*, or *frætwan*; and an ornament is *frætew*; but *frætan* signifies to gnaw or to eat; and upon our recollecting that the diagonal ornament of Saxon building is an exact imitation of teeth, we can hardly refrain from supposing that the ornament was an intended imitation of teeth. *Frætew* and *frætwung*, which they used to signify ornament, may be construed fretwork, or teeth-work. The teeth which the Saxon diagonals represent are, I believe, marine teeth. If so, perhaps they arose from the stringing of teeth of the large sea animals.

We will mention a few of the ancient Saxon buildings we meet with, and shew how they are described.

³⁵ See Carter's Ancient Architecture.

³⁶ Ib. p. 15.

BOOK
XII.

In 627 Paulinus built the first Christian church, in Northumbria, of wood; it was afterwards rebuilt on a larger scale, and with stone: he also built a stone church at Lincoln. His church at York was not very skilfully erected; for in less than a century afterwards, Wilfrid found its stony offices half destroyed; its roof was permeable to moisture. It had windows of fine linen cloth, or latticed wood-work; but no glazed casements, and therefore the birds flew in and out, and made nests in it.³⁷ So Bede says of his church at Lincoln, that though the walls were standing, the roof had fallen down.³⁸

In 676 Benedict sought cementarios, or masons, to make a church in the Roman manner, which he loved. But the Roman manner seems not to express the Roman science and taste, but rather a work of stone, and of the large size which the Romans used. It was finished in a year after its foundation.³⁹

At this period glass-makers were not known among the Saxons. But Benedict had heard of them, and he sent to Gaul for some, to make latticed windows to the porticoes and cænaculum of the church. From those whom he employed the Saxons learned the art.⁴⁰

In the 7th century, Cuthbert built a monastery, which is described. From wall to wall it was of four or five perches. The outside was higher than a standing man. The wall was not made of cut stone, or bricks and cement, but of unpolished stones and turf, which they had dug from the spot. Some of the stones four men could hardly lift. The roofs were made of wood and clay.⁴¹

As their architectural practice improved, they chose better materials. Thus Firman took from the church at Durham its thatched roof, and covered it with plates of lead.⁴²

About 709, Wilfrid flourished. He, like many others, had travelled to Rome, and of course beheld the most valuable

³⁷ Malmsb. 149.³⁸ Bede, ii. 16.³⁹ Ib. p. 295.⁴⁰ Bede, p. 295.⁴¹ Ib. 243.⁴² Ib. 25

specimens of ancient art. He brought thence some masons and artificers.⁴³ Though he could not imitate these, he sought to improve the efforts of his countrymen. The church of Paulinus at York he completely repaired. He covered the roof with pure lead, he washed its walls from their dirt, and by glass windows (to use the words of my author) he kept out the birds and rain, and yet admitted light.

CHAE.
V.

At Ripon he also erected a church with polished stone, adorned with various columns and porticoes. At Hexham he made a similar building. It was founded deep, and made of polished stones, with many columns and porticoes, adorned with great length and height of walls. It had many windings, both above and below, carried spirally round. It was superior to any edifice on this side of the Alps. In the inside was a stony pavement, on which a workman fell from a scaffold of enormous height.⁴⁴

In 716, we read of Croyland monastery. The marshy ground would not sustain a stony mass. The king therefore had a vast number of piles of oak and alders fixed in the ground, and earth was brought in boats nine miles off to be mingled with the timber and the marsh, to complete the foundation.⁴⁵

In 969, a church was built. The preceding winter was employed in preparing the iron and wooden instruments, and all other necessities. The most skilful artificers were then brought. The length and breadth of the church were measured out, deep foundations were laid on account of the neighbouring moisture, and they were strengthened by frequent percussions of the rams. While some workmen carried stones, others made cement, and others raised both aloft by a machine with a wheel. Two towers with their tops soon rose, of which the smaller was visible on the west in the front of the church. The larger in the middle with four spires, pressed on four columns, connected together by arches passing from one to the other, that they might not separate.⁴⁶

⁴³ Malmsb. lib. iii.

⁴⁴ Eddius Vita Wilfridi, 59—63.

⁴⁵ Ingulf, p. 4.

⁴⁶ 3 Gale, 399.

It is supposed that many specimens of ancient Saxon architecture yet remain; as part of St. Peter's at Oxford, part of St. Alban's abbey church, Tickencote church, near Stamford in Lincolnshire, the porch on the south side of Shireburn minster, Barfreton church, in Kent, Iffley church, and some others. But the works and delineations of professional men must be consulted on this subject.

At Barfreton, the church was erected in the twelfth century, and is a fine specimen of the style. It is a square building, with a square tower at the west end, and a square porch at the south end. The tower is built of Saxon masonry, and is decorated with various carvings. The porch is also of Saxon work, and is supported by four columns. The church is a fine example of the style, and is well worth a visit.

The church at Iffley is also a fine specimen of the style. It is a square building, with a square tower at the west end, and a square porch at the south end. The tower is built of Saxon masonry, and is decorated with various carvings. The porch is also of Saxon work, and is supported by four columns. The church is a fine example of the style, and is well worth a visit.

The church at Tickencote is also a fine specimen of the style. It is a square building, with a square tower at the west end, and a square porch at the south end. The tower is built of Saxon masonry, and is decorated with various carvings. The porch is also of Saxon work, and is supported by four columns. The church is a fine example of the style, and is well worth a visit.

The church at Shireburn is also a fine specimen of the style. It is a square building, with a square tower at the west end, and a square porch at the south end. The tower is built of Saxon masonry, and is decorated with various carvings. The porch is also of Saxon work, and is supported by four columns. The church is a fine example of the style, and is well worth a visit.

The church at St. Peter's is also a fine specimen of the style. It is a square building, with a square tower at the west end, and a square porch at the south end. The tower is built of Saxon masonry, and is decorated with various carvings. The porch is also of Saxon work, and is supported by four columns. The church is a fine example of the style, and is well worth a visit.

The church at St. Alban's is also a fine specimen of the style. It is a square building, with a square tower at the west end, and a square porch at the south end. The tower is built of Saxon masonry, and is decorated with various carvings. The porch is also of Saxon work, and is supported by four columns. The church is a fine example of the style, and is well worth a visit.

CHAP. VI.

Their Sciences.

THE most enlightened nations of antiquity had not made much progress in any of the sciences but the mathematical. During the Anglo-Saxon period they were nearly extinct in Christian Europe. Happily for mankind, they were attended to in this æra more efficiently in the Mahomedan kingdoms, in Spain; and the Arabian mind had the merit of preparing that intellectual feast which we are now lavishly enjoying, and perpetually enlarging.

CHAP.
VI.

The history of the sciences among the Anglo-Saxons can contain little more information than that some individuals successively arose, as Aldhelm, Bede, Alcuin, Joannes Scotus, and a few more, who endeavoured to learn what former ages had known, and who freely disseminated what they had acquired. Besides the rules of Latin poetry and rhetoric, they studied arithmetic and astronomy as laborious sciences.

In their arithmetic, before the introduction of the Arabian figures, they followed the path of the ancients, and chiefly studied the metaphysical distinctions of numbers. They divided the even numbers into the useless arrangement of equally equal, equally unequal, and unequally equal; and the odd numbers into the simple, the composite, and the mean. They considered them again, as even or odd, superfluous, defective, or perfect, and under a variety of other distinctions, still more unnecessary for any practical application, which may be seen in the little tracts of Cassiodorus and Bede. Puzzled and perplexed with all this mazy jargon, Aldhelm might well say, that the labour of all his other acquisitions was small in the comparison with that which he endured in studying arithmetic.

Their astronomy was such as they could comprehend in the Greek and Latin treatises which fell into their hands on this subject. Bede was indefatigable in studying it, and his treatises were translated into the Anglo-Saxon, of which some MSS. exist still in the Cotton Library. All the studious men applied to it more or less, though many used it for astrological superstitions. It was perhaps on this account, rather than from a love of the nobler directions of the science, that our ancient chroniclers are usually minute in noticing the eclipses which occurred, and the comets and meteors which occasionally appeared.

Their geographical knowledge must have been much improved by Adamnan's account of his visit to the Holy Land, which Bede abridged; and by the sketch given of general geography in Orosius, which Alfred made the property of all his countrymen, by his translation and masterly additions. The eight hides of land given by his namesake for a MS. of cosmographical treatises,* of wonderful workmanship, may have been conceded rather to the beauty of the MS. than to its contents. But, notwithstanding these helps, the most incorrect and absurd notions seem to have prevailed among our ancestors concerning the other parts of the globe, if we may judge from the MS. treatises on this subject, which they took the trouble to adorn with drawings, and sometimes to translate. Two of these are in the Cotton Library, and a short notice of their contents may not be uninteresting, as a specimen of their geographical and physical knowledge.

The MS. Tib. B. 5. contains a topographical description of some eastern regions, in Latin and Saxon. From this we learn there is a place in the way to the Red Sea which contains red hens, and that if any man touches them, his hand and all his body are burnt immediately: also, that pepper is guarded by serpents, which are driven away by fire, and this makes the pepper black. We read of people with dogs' heads, boars'

* Bede, 299.

tusks, and horses' manes, and breathing flames. Also of ants as big as dogs, with feet like grasshoppers, red and black. These creatures dig gold for fifteen days. Men go with female camels, and their young ones, to fetch it, which the ants permit, on having the liberty to eat the young camels.²

The same learned work informed our ancestors that there was a white human race fifteen feet high, with two faces on one head, long nose, and black hair, who in the time of parturition went to India to lay in. Other men had thighs twelve feet long, and breasts seven feet high. They were cannibals. There was another sort of mankind with no heads, who had eyes and mouths in their breasts. They were eight feet tall and eight feet broad. Other men had eyes which shone like a lamp in a dark night. In the ocean there was a soft-voiced race, who were human to the navel, but all below were the limbs of an ass. These fables even came so near as Gaul, for it tells us that in Liconia, in Gaul, there were men of three colours, with heads like lions, and mouths like the sails of a windmill. They were twenty feet tall. They run away, and sweat blood, but were thought to be men.

The descriptions of foreign ladies were not very gallant. It is stated that near Babylon there were women with beards to their breasts. They were clothed in horses' hides, and were great hunters, but they used tigers and leopards instead of dogs. Other women had boars' tusks, hair to their heels, and a cow's tail. They were thirteen feet high. They had a beautiful body, as white as marble, but they had camels' feet. Black men living on burning mountains; trees bearing precious stones; and a golden vineyard which had berries one hundred and fifty feet long, which produced jewels; gryphons, phoenixes, and beasts with asses' ears, sheep's wool, and birds' feet, are among the other wonders which instructed our ances-

² This was probably a popular notion; mels will bring much gold from the ants, for it is said, among their prognostics, that who keep the gold hoards. MSS. CCC. if the sun shine on the fourth day, the ca- Cant. Wanl. 110.

tors. The accounts in the MS. Vitellius, A. 15. rival the phænomena just recited, with others as credible, and are also illustrated with drawings.

We cannot now get at the national opinions of the Anglo-Saxons on physical subjects in any other way than by observing what things they thought worthy to be committed to writing. They who could write were among the most informed part of the Saxon society, and as their parchment materials were scanty, it seems reasonable to suppose that what they employed themselves in writing stood high in their estimation. We will add a few things which are in Anglo-Saxon in a MS. in the Cotton Library.

“Istoriuss said that this world’s length is twelve thousand miles, and its breadth six thousand three hundred, besides the islands.—There are thirty-four kinds of snakes on the earth; thirty-six kinds of fish, and fifty-two kinds of flying fowls.—The name of the city to which the sun goes up is called Jaiaca; the city where it sets is Jainta.—Asguges, the magician, said that the sun was of burning stone.—The sun is red in the first part of the morning, because he comes out of the sea; he is red in the evening, because he looks over hell.—The sun is bigger than the earth, and hence he is hot in every country.—The sun shines at night in three places; first in Leviathan the whale’s inside. He shines next in hell, and afterwards on the islands named Glith, and there the souls of holy men remain till doomsday.—Neither the sun nor the moon shines on the Red Sea, nor does the wind blow upon it.” Some excellent moral and prudential maxims follow in the MS.¹

The astronomical opinions which they had imbibed from their classical masters were probably as good as their books could supply, or their scholars understand. Elfric has transmitted to us, out of Alcuin, their acquired opinions on the motions of the heavens, which may be thus translated:

“The earth consists of four creatures, or elements; fire, air,

¹ MS. Cott. Lib. Julius, A. 2.

water, and earth. The nature of fire is hot and dry; of air, warm and wet; of water, cold and wet; of earth, cold and dry. Heaven is of the nature of fire, and it is always turning the stars. Foreign writers have said that it would fall, on account of its swiftness, if the seven wandering stars (*dweligen dan steorran*) did not resist its course.—The stars of heaven are always turning round the earth from east to west, and strive against the seven wandering stars. These are called erring or wandering stars (*dweligende* or *worigende*), not because of any error, but because each of them goeth on in its own course, sometimes above, sometimes below, and are not fast in the firmament of heaven, as the other stars are. The farthest the heathen calls Saturnus; he fulfilleth his course in thirty years. The one beneath Saturn they call Jove, and he fulfilleth his course in twelve years. The third, that goeth beneath Jove, they call Mars; and he fulfilleth his course in two years. The fourth is the Sun; she fulfilleth her course in twelve months; that is, 365 days. The fifth is called Venus; he fulfilleth his course in 368 days. The sixth is Mercury, great and bright; he fulfilleth his course in 329 days. The seventh is the Moon, the lowest of all the stars; he fulfilleth his course in 27 days and eight hours. These seven stars move to the east, in opposition to the heavens, and are stronger than they are.”⁴

It would be absurd to talk about their chemistry, as they had none; but their methods of preparing gold for their gold writing may be mentioned, as they were in fact so many chemical experiments.

One method. “File gold very finely, put it in a mortar, and add the sharpest vinegar; rub it till it becomes black, and then pour it out. Put to it some salt or nitre, and so it will dissolve. So you may write with it, and thus all the metals may be dissolved.”

The gold letters of the Anglo-Saxon MSS. are on a white

⁴ Elfric's Lives of the Saints, MS. Cott. Julius, E. 7.

embossment, which is probably a calcareous preparation. Modern gilding is made on an oil size of yellow ochre, or on a water size of gypsum, or white oxide of lead, or on similar substances. For gilding on paper or parchment, gold powder is now used as much as leaf gold. Our ancestors used both occasionally.

Another method of ancient chrysography: "Melt some lead, and frequently immerse it in cold water. Melt gold, and pour that into the same water, and it will become brittle. Then rub the gold filings carefully with quicksilver, and purge it carefully while it is liquid. Before you write, dip the pen in liquid alum, which is best purified by salt and vinegar."

Another method: "Take thin plates of gold and silver, rub them in a mortar with Greek salt or nitre till it disappears. Pour on water, and repeat it. Then add salt, and so wash it. When the gold remains even, add a moderate portion of the flowers of copper and bullock's gall; rub them together, and write and burnish the letters." Other methods are mentioned, by which even marble and glass might be gilt. These descriptions are taken by Muratori from a MS. of the 9th century, which contains many other curious receipts on this subject.⁹

They had the art of secret writing, by substituting other letters for the five vowels: thus,

b	f	k	p	x
a	e	i	o	u

The MS. in the Cotton Library⁶ gives several examples of this:

nys thks frfgfn sylknc thknc to rædfnnf
pmnkxm knkmkcprxm sxprxm dpmknb bktxr
kn npmknf dk sxmmk.

Which are,

nys this fregen syllic thinc to rædenne
omnium inimicorum suorum dominabitur.
In nomine Di summi.

⁹ Tom. ii. p. 375—383.

⁶ Vitellius, E. 18.

Among the disorders which afflicted the Anglo-Saxons, we find instances of the scrofula, the gout, or foot adl; fever, or gedrif; paralysis, hemiplegia; ague, dysentery; consumption, or lungs adl; convulsions, madness, blindness, diseased head, the head-ach (heafod-ece), and tumours in various parts.⁷ But if we consider the charms which they had against diseases as evidence of the existence of those diseases, then the melancholy catalogue may be increased by the addition of the poccas (pustules), sore eyes and ears, blegen and blacan blegene (blains and boils), elfsidenne (the night-mare), cynla (indurated glands), toth-ece, aneurisms (wennas et mannes, heortan), and some others.⁸

Nations in their barbarous æras have usually considered diseases to be the inflictions of evil beings whose power exceeded that of man. Adapting their practice to their theory, they have met the calamity by methods which were the best adapted, according to their system, to remove them; that is, they attacked spells by spells. They opposed charms and exorcisms to what they believed to be the work of demoniacal incantations. The Anglo-Saxons had the same superstitions. Their pagan ancestors had referred diseases to such causes, and, believing the principle, they resorted to the same remedies. Hence we have in their MSS. a great variety of incantations and exorcisms against the disorders which distressed them.

When some of their stronger intellects had attained to discredit these superstitions, and especially after Christianity opened to them a new train of associations; this system of diseases originating from evil spirits, and of their being curable by magical phrases, received a fatal blow. It had begun to decline before they were enlightened by any just medical knowledge, and the consequence was, that they had

⁷ Malmsb. 285. Bonif. Lett. 16. M. B. 297. iii. 11. iv. 3.; 10. v. 2.; 246.; 115. Bede, 86, 509. 3 Gale, 470. Ed- 235. iv. 19.
dius, 44. Bede, 372. iv. 23. 31. iii. 12. ⁸ Cal. A. 15. CCC. Cant. Wanley, 115,
iv. 6.; 224. 236. 256. Ingulf, 11. Bede, Tit. D. 26. Wanley, Cat. 304, 305.

nothing to substitute in the stead of charms, but the fancies and pretended experience of those who arrogated knowledge on the subject. Before men began to take up medicine as a profession, the domestic practice of it would of course fall on females, who, in every stage of society, assume the kind task of nursing sickness; and of these the aged, as the most experienced, would be preferred.

But the Anglo-Saxons, so early as the seventh century, had men who made the science of medicine a study, and who practised it as a profession. It is probable that they owed this invaluable improvement to the Christian clergy, who not only introduced books from Rome, but who, in almost every monastery, had one brother who was consulted as the physician of the place. We find physicians frequently mentioned in Bede; and among the letters of Boniface, there is one from an Anglo-Saxon, desiring some books *de medicinalibus*. He says they had plenty of such books in England, but that the foreign drawings in them were unknown to his countrymen, and difficult to acquire.*

We have a splendid instance of the attention they gave to medical knowledge, in the Anglo-Saxon medical treatise described by Wanley, which he states to have been written about the time of Alfred. The first part of it contains 88 remedies against various diseases. The second part adds 67 more; and in the third part are 76. Some lines between the second and third part state it to have been possessed by one BALD, and to have been written at his command by Cild. It is probably a compilation from the Latin medical writers. Wanley presumes that Bald wrote it; but the words imply rather possession than authorship.¹⁰ Their construction is ambiguous.

We find several Saxon MSS. of medical botany. There is one, a translation of the *Herbarium* of Apuleius, with some

* 16 Mag. Bib. Pat. 82.

¹⁰ Bald habet hunc librum Cild quem conscribere jussit. Wanl. Cat. 180.

good drawings of herbs and flowers, in the Cotton Library. Their remedies were usually vegetable medicines."

CHAP.
VI.

Their
Surgery.

We have a few hints of their surgical attentions, but they seem not to have exceeded those common operations which every people, a little removed from barbarism, cannot fail to know and to use.

We read of a skull fractured by a fall from a horse, which the surgeon closed and bound up;¹² of a man whose legs and arms were broken by a fall, which the surgeons cured by tight ligatures;¹³ and of a diseased head, in the treatment of which the medical attendants were successful.¹⁴ But we find many cases in which their efforts were unavailing. Thus in an instance of a great swelling on the eyelid, which grew daily, and threatened the loss of the sight; the surgeons exhausted their skill to no purpose, and declared that it must be cut off.¹⁵ In a case of a great swelling, with burning heat, on the neck, where the necklace came, it was laid open to let out the noxious matter. This treatment gave the patient ease for two days, but on the third the pains returned, and she died.¹⁶ Another person had his knee swelled, and the muscles of his leg drawn up till it became a contracted limb. Medical aid is said to have been exhibited in vain, till an angel advised wheat flower to be boiled in milk, and the limb to be poulticed with it, applied while warm.¹⁷ To recover his frozen feet, a person put them into the bowels of a horse.¹⁸

Venesection was in use. We read of a man bled in the arm: The operation seems to have been done unskilfully, for a great pain came on while bleeding, and the arm swelled very much.¹⁹ Their lancet was called *æder-seax*, or vein-knife. But their practice of phlebotomy was governed by the most mischievous superstition. It was not used when expediency required, but when their superstitions permitted. They marked the seasons

¹¹ MS. Cott. Vitel. C. 3.

¹² Bede, v. c. 6.

¹³ Eddius, p. 63.

¹⁴ Bede, v. 2.

¹⁵ Bede, iv. 32.

¹⁷ Ib. p. 230.

¹⁸ Malmsb. 201.

¹⁹ Bede, v. 2.

¹⁶ Ib. 19.

and the days on which they believed that bleeding would be fatal. Even Theodore, the monk, to whom they owed so much of their literature, added to their follies on this subject, by imparting the notion that it was dangerous to bleed when the light of the moon and the tides were increasing.²⁰ According to the rules laid down in an Anglo-Saxon MS. the second, third, fifth, sixth, ninth, eleventh, fifteenth, seventeenth, and twentieth days of the month, were bad days for bleeding. On the tenth, thirteenth, nineteenth, twenty-first, twenty-third, twenty-fourth, twenty-fifth, twenty-sixth, and twenty-eighth days, it was hurtful to bleed, except during certain hours of the days. The rest of the month was proper for phlebotomy.²¹ They had their tales to support their credulity. Thus we read of "sum læce, or a physician, who let his horse blood on one of these days, and it lay soon dead."²²

We will add, as a specimen of their medical charms, their incantation to cure a fever.

"In nomine dni nri Ihu Xpi tera tera tera testis contera taberna gise ges mande leis bois eis andies mandies moab leb lebes Dns ds adjutor sit illi ill eax filiax artifex am."²³

Two of their medicines may be added, one for the cure of consumption, the other for the gout.

With lungen adle.—"Take hwite hare hunan (white horehound) and ysypo (hyssop) and rudan (rue) and galluc (sowbread), and brysewyr, and brunwyr (brown wort), and wude merce (parsley), and grundeswylian (groundsel), of each twenty penny-weights, and take one sester²⁴ full of old ale, and seethe

²⁰ Bede, v. 3.

²¹ MS. Cott. Lib. Tiber. A. 3.

²² Ib. 126.

²³ Ib. 125.

²⁴ The quantity of a sester appears, from the following curious list of Anglo-Saxon weights and measures, to have been fifteen pints:

Pund eles gewihth xii penegum læsse thon̄ pund wætres.

Pund ealoth gewihth vi penegum mare thon̄ pund wætres.

Pund wines gewihth xv penegum more thon̄ I pund wætres.

Pund huniges gewihth xxxiv penegum more thon̄ pund wætres.

Pund buteran gewihth lxxx penegum læsse thon̄ pund wætres.

Pund beores gewihth xxii penegum læsse thon̄ pund wætres.

the herbs till the liquor be half boiled away. Drink every day fasting a neap-full cold, and in the evening as much warm."

CHAP.
VI.

With fot adle (the gout).—"Take the herb datulus or titulosa, which we call greata crauleac (tuberosa isis). Take the heads of it, and dry them very much, and take thereof a pennyweight and an half, and the pear-tree and roman bark, and cummin, and a fourth part of laurel-berries, and of the other herbs half a pennyweight of each, and six pepper-corns, and grind all to dust, and put two egg-shells full of wine. This is true leechcraft. Give it to the man to drink till he be well."²⁵

Pund melowes gewihth cxv penegum læsse thoñ pund wætres.

Pund beana gewihth lv penegum læsse thoñ pund wætres.

And xv pund wætres gath to Sestre.

Saxon MS. ap. Wanley Cat. p. 179.

²⁵ MS. Cott. Lib. Vitell. C. 3.

THE
HISTORY
OF THE
ANGLO-SAXONS.

BOOK XIII.

Their Religion.

CHAP. I.

*The History of the Propagation of Christianity among the
Anglo-Saxons.*

IT has often been remarked as a peculiar merit of the Christian religion, that it neither arose from ambition, nor was propagated by the sword. It appealed unoffendingly to the reason, the sensibility, the virtue, and the interest of mankind; and it established itself in every province of the Roman empire.

When the torrent of barbarians overspread Europe, to the destruction of all arts and knowledge, Christianity fell in the general shipwreck. Soon, however, in some districts, she raised her mild and interesting form, and the savages yielded to her benign influence.

Among the Anglo-Saxons, her conquest over the fierce and wild paganism which our ancestors adored, was not begun till France and even Ireland had submitted to her laws; but it was

CHAP.

I.

accomplished in a manner worthy of her benevolence and purity.

Genuine piety seems to have led the first missionaries to our shores. Their zeal, their perseverance, and the excellence of the system they diffused, made their labours successful.

Gregory the Great was one of the few popes whose character has been distinguished by sincere religion. In some we see little else than the politician, the voluptuary, and the hypocrite. But most of the earliest possessors of the papal dignity display a nobler life; and among these Gregory is remarkable for a zeal that never slept, and for a piety that, though always eminently active, was yet injudiciously austere.¹

His father was a nobleman, who educated him for civil offices. He was always studious, though fond of costly habits of silk and gold; and he began his political life by discharging the office of the city pretor.

Religion exciting his attachment, he abandoned the scenes of ambition and the ornaments of luxury, and devoted himself to an ecclesiastical life. His father's death allowed him to pursue his own wishes.

Out of his rich inheritance he built and liberally endowed six monasteries in Sicily, and one in Rome. In this he unambitiously entered as a private monk, appointing another to be its abbot. Having provided for the support of these establishments, he sold the rest of his property, and divided it among the poor.²

¹ Our Venerable Bede has given a slight sketch of the Pope's life in his history, l. ii. c. 1. Gregory of Tours, a still more ancient writer, supplies us with much more information, l. x. c. 1. Isidorus, Paulus Diaconus, archbishop Ado, Simon Metaphrastes, and others, have also recorded him. But his most elaborate, though not most judicious biographer, is Joannes Diaconus, whose life, with the other accounts, is prefixed to the edition of Gregory's works in large folio. Paris, 1640.

² Greg. Tournon, l. x. c. 1. Joan. Diac. l. i. This latter writer has crowded the life of Gregory with a series of miracles, which have as few of the graces of fancy as of truth. This author closes the life with a vision, which he boldly claims to have happened to himself.—The devil came to him as he had finished his fourth book; teased and terrified him by putting out his light. Gregory himself and two other persons immediately appeared to him, re-illuminated and consoled him! As he had given about a

His severe abstinence, watchings, prayer, and studies, occasioned a pressure of disease, which made his life a continued indisposition.³ Though possessed of all the means of the amplest indulgence, he used nothing for his daily food but raw pulse, sent by his mother. In this extreme austerity there is nothing to admire but the motive. So much self-restraint as will produce self-government is wise and salutary. All severer mortification makes a phantom of terror of that religion whose natural character is to attract mankind by her smiles, her sociability, her benignity, and her suitability to every climate of nature, and every class of mankind.

The accidental sight of English youth exposed to sale in the market-place at Rome, excited his first wishes for the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons. He was struck with their fair and beautiful countenances: he enquired who they were, and was informed that they came from Britain, where the inhabitants were all of the same complexion. When he heard that such an interesting race were still pagans, he groaned heavily, and exclaimed, "Why should the prince of darkness have such splendid subjects! Why should the mind be so dark, when the person is so beautiful!"

His sensibility was excited. On learning that their name was Angles, the sound immediately associated itself with their personal appearance, and his religious impressions. "Angles! that is to say, angels. They have angel countenances, and ought to join the angelic companies."

That such a people ought to be in the possession of a religion which Gregory considered to be the noblest gift of happiness to man, was his next association. The name of their

hundred miracles very liberally to Gregory, he seems to have thought it allowable to take the credit of a little one to himself.

³ Gregory himself says, in a letter to Leander, prefixed to his Job, "Many years have rolled over me, during which I have been frequently tormented with internal pains. Every hour, every moment I lan-

guish under the evils of a weak and disordered stomach. I am in a slow, but perpetual fever. But in these afflictions I recollect that God chastiseth every son whom he receives; and I trust that the more I am oppressed with present evils, the more ardently I shall pant for a happy eternity."

province, Deira, was a consonancy that struck him: "De ira, " from wrath!—Yes, from the wrath of God they must be " plucked, and brought to the grace of Christ." While this new and benevolent idea was floating in his mind, he heard that their king's name was Ella; and with all the ardour of that sincere piety which governed his actions he exclaimed, " Alleluia!—they must sing Alleluias there in praise of their " Creator."⁴

Gregory obtained leave from the pope to visit England as a missionary. But the Roman people, disturbed that a man who was their favourite should undertake such a perilous enterprise, raised so much clamour at his departure, that it was thought prudent to recal him;⁵ and he was afterwards sent to Constantinople as the apostolical legate, where he composed his expositions on the book of Job.

His correspondence embraced the principal regions of the known world, in the different stages of his life. We have his letters to persons in Italy, Sicily, Malta, France, Spain, Naples, Corsica, Sardinia, Dalmatia, Illyricum, Corinth, Antioch, Constantinople, Numidia, and other parts of Africa. His numerous letters and writings, which fill some folio volumes, display an intellectual activity that, in a more enlightened age, and with a happier education, would have obtained no small proportion of literary celebrity.

Before he was pope, he gave some testimony that his compassionate admiration of the English captives was not a mere transient impression.

A letter of his to a presbyter in Gaul is still extant, in which he desires him to buy some Angle youths of seventeen or eighteen years of age, that they might be taken into monasteries.⁶

But when he was chosen to the pontifical dignity, he determined to realize the favourite purpose of his youth. He

⁴ Bede, l. ii. c. i.

⁵ Jo. Diac. H. l. i. c. 22.

⁶ See his Letters, p. 166.

selected Augustine and some other monks to proceed to England to preach Christianity.

They had not journeyed long before the terrors of a fierce unbelieving nation, and the difficulties of an unknown language, overcame their resolution. They sent back Augustine to remonstrate on the danger, and to persuade the pope to abandon his project. Happily for England, Gregory's mind was of sterner texture. He chided their timidity; he exhorted them not to be deterred by the fatigues of the journey, or false reports; he recommended them to the bishop of Arles, in France; and, to produce a necessary subordination, and a more vigorous mission, he constituted Augustine their spiritual chief.⁷

With better courage they renewed their journey, and landed in Thanet. It was auspicious to their undertaking, that the queen of Kent, a Frankish princess, was a Christian.

By the aid of Franks, as interpreters, they sent a message to Ethelbert, the sovereign of the country, announcing that they had arrived from Rome upon an embassy so momentous as to bring everlasting felicity to those who received it. Ethelbert ordered them to approach him. With a silver cross and a picture of Christ they advanced, singing hymns. The king received them in the open air, that he might be less under the power of any witchcraft. They disclosed their wishes, and received this manly and sensible answer, that would not have disgraced the most enlightened philosopher:

“Your promises are interesting, but as they are new to me,
“and uncertain, I cannot forsake the established customs
“of my nation. The distance which you have traversed for
“our sakes, and your desire to impart to us what you be-
“lieve to be true and useful, entitle you to our hospitality.
“You shall be supplied with food, and we shall not forbid
“any from joining your religion whom you can persuade to
“adopt it.”⁸

⁷ Bede, l. i. c. 23. who gives a copy of his letter.

⁸ Ib. c. 25.

They entered their appointed residence in Canterbury, and began a life of rigid piety. Patient, indefatigable, abstinent, and devout, they attracted the popular esteem; and the conversion of the king deciding the opinion of his subjects, their proselytes became numerous.⁹

Gregory watched over the infant establishment with paternal care. He sent additional missionaries, with garments, relics, and books. He directed the ordination of the bishops; and, to suit the prejudices of the English, he allowed the pagan temples to be used if purified; and as they were in the habit of sacrificing to their idols cattle on certain occasions, he permitted the custom to be continued, but the victims to be offered up to the Deity.¹⁰

Having established Christianity in Kent, Augustine appointed Mellitus, one of his fellow missionaries, to announce it to the people of Essex. The king at this time was Saberct, the nephew of Ethelbert, and this circumstance opened an avenue for the promulgation. It spread through the province, and Ethelbert built the church of St. Paul, in London.¹¹

On the deaths of Ethelbert and Saberct, the new religion declined under the hostility of their successors. The royal opposition was so vehement, that the chief ecclesiastics meditated, and some effected a temporary retreat. At last the monk who on Augustine's death had obtained his supremacy, made a bold effort to impress the mind of Eadbald, the king of Kent. He suddenly appeared before him, with his body bleeding from stripes. Eadbald inquired who had been the author of such violence. The monk informed him that he was preparing to abandon the country, and that the Prince of the Apostles had thus severely chastised him for so guilty a thought. The king was awed by the narration, and thus the

⁹ Bede, l. i. c. 26.

¹⁰ Ib. c. 30.

¹¹ Ib. l. ii. c. 3.

voluntary sufferings of Lawrence, politically referred to St. Peter, caused the persecution to cease.¹²

CHAP.
I.

The people of London were more intractable. They would not re-admit Mellitus, who had been appointed their bishop, preferring their ancient priests. In 640, Earconberht, the son of Eadbald, removed the idols of Kent.¹³

Within less than thirty years after the arrival of Augustine, the province of Northumbria exchanged the absurdities of idolatry for the morals and hopes of Christianity. Edwin had addressed the daughter of Ethelbert by his ambassadors; but the lady disliked a pagan husband. Edwin pronounced that she and her attendants should enjoy their faith unmolested, and that he himself would have its merits considered; and if they were found to be more worthy of the divine Governor of the world than his national tenets, he would not hesitate to embrace it. The princess accepted his hand; and in 625 Paulinus, one of the missionaries sent by Gregory to England, accompanied her to Edwin; but his first attempts to change the opinions of the people were unsuccessful.¹⁴

The escape of Edwin from the dagger of the assassin,¹⁵ on the same night in which his queen experienced a safe delivery, disposed his mind to listen to the suggestions of Paulinus, who piously referred both the blessings to the divine author of the faith which his queen professed. Edwin, whose mind, however valuable, could not then, from its ignorance, have appreciated Christianity from its evidences, placed his religious decision upon one event. He was about to march his army against the king who had commissioned the assassin to attack him; and he promised Paulinus that, if victory favoured his expedition, he would renounce his idols. As a pledge of his sincerity, he allowed Paulinus to baptize his new-born daughter, who was the first of the Northumbrians that received the Christian rite. Edwin succeeded against

¹² Bede, l. ii. c. 6.

¹³ Ib. l. iii. c. 8.

¹⁴ Bede, l. ii. c. 9.

¹⁵ See vol. i. of this History, p. 140.

his enemies, and fulfilled so much of his promise as to abandon his idolatry. He was not, however, one of those men who easily lay aside old prejudices, or hastily adopt new opinions. He would not embrace Christianity till his judgment was satisfied. Bede relates, that he chose to hear very diligently Paulinus explain the religion, and that he also conferred much with his wisest nobles, to be benefited by their judgment upon it. Bede adds, that as he was a man of great sagacity, he often sat by himself, silently deliberating what he ought to do, and to which religion he should adhere.¹⁶

While his mind was debating with itself this great question, he received an affectionate letter from Boniface, who then held the papal see, forcibly arguing the folly of idolatry, and earnestly recommending him to embrace the Christian faith.¹⁷ Edwin still paused; but at length determined to convene his witenagemot, and to be governed by its determination. At this council he demanded of each, what he thought of this new system and worship, which had been so earnestly recommended.

Coifi, the high priest of his idols, expressed his opinion immediately. He said there was no virtue and no utility in the religion which they had hitherto cultivated: that none of the king's followers had been more studious of the worship of their gods than himself, and yet many had enjoyed more of the royal gifts and honours, and had prospered more abundantly in every worldly advantage. "If our gods had been of any use, they would have better assisted me, their zealous votary. Therefore I infer, that if this new faith be more advantageous, we ought to examine and adopt it without delay."

This speech is more curious for its singularity and selfishness than for its wisdom. Christianity expressly teaches its disciples, not to make worldly profit either the criterion of

¹⁶ Bede, l. ii. c. 9.

¹⁷ See it in Bede, l. ii. c. 10., and another to his Queen Adelberge, c. 11.

their faith or the exclusive object of their lives. One of the laws of the divine government of man which it reveals to us is, that the blessings and the evils of the present state of things are alike the instruments of our moral discipline and improvement. The good are frequently lessoned by sufferings, and the erring are often entrusted with prosperity. Nothing could be therefore more absurd, than for this man to have adopted Christianity, because his paganism had not gratified his ambition and his avarice.

The next speaker, an ealdorman,* displayed a noble and contemplative mind; and his speech, as coming from an illiterate Saxon witan in that rude age, and with no other knowledge than such as his barbarous idolatry afforded, is peculiarly interesting:

“The present life of man, O king, compared with that
“space of time beyond, of which we have no certainty, re-
“minds me of one of your wintry feasts, where you sit with
“your generals and ministers. The hearth blazes in the
“middle, and a grateful heat is diffused around, while the
“storms of rain and snow are raging fierce without. Driven
“by the chilling tempest, a little sparrow enters at one door,
“and flies delighted around us till it departs thro’ the other.
“While it stays within our mansion, it feels not the winter’s
“storm; but when this short interval of happiness has been
“enjoyed, it is forced again into the same dreary scene from
“which it had escaped, and we behold it no more. Such is
“the life of man, and we are as ignorant of the state which
“has preceded our present existence, as of that which will fol-
“low it. Thus situated, I feel that if this new faith can give
“us more certainty on this important subject, it merits our
“belief.”

This reflective counsellor placed his judgment exactly on the proper point. The great value of Christianity arises from the glorious scene of future felicity which is appended to it.

* Alfred translation, p. 516.

Its benign and benevolent spirit naturally interests the man of sensibility and taste. Its wise morality is justly appreciated by the philosophical statesman. These advantages might, however, have been enjoyed in some degree, from the progress of human wisdom profiting by experience. But the delightful assurance of a happy futurity, and a certain knowledge of the terms on which it is to be acquired, could be obtained from no other source than a divine revelation.

Fancy has painted an elysium, and thinking men have argued about it; but that religion, which can give mankind certainty on this impressive subject, is a blessing to human nature peculiarly interesting. The Saxon witan therefore expressed the answer of the most enlightened wisdom, when he said that if Christianity could give us any thing more certain about the awful future than any other religion, it ought to be preferred. Christianity has accomplished the long aspiring hope of reason on this point, and has thereby given an importance and a charm to human life, which it could not have possessed before. Without Christianity, human life is not a good which a wise man would eagerly covet; but, connected with Christianity, it becomes a blessing whose advantages never terminate.

The other counsellors of Edwin expressed sentiments like those we have cited. The high priest desired to hear the discourse of Paulinus on the subject. The king assented, and the missionary addressed the Gemot. Animated by his eloquence, Coifi exclaimed, "Formerly I understood nothing that I was worshipping, and the more industriously I sought for truth, the less of it I could find. But in this system, the gift of eternal life and happiness are clearly unfolded to us. Therefore, O king, I advise that our useless temples be immediately consigned to flames and to execration." He solicited the king to give him arms and a horse, neither of which did their previous tenets allow a priest to use. Girded with a sword, he seized a lance, and rode on horseback to the temple. The multitude thought him mad. But he fearlessly

profaned the temple by darting his lance into it, and then commanded his followers to destroy it. Edwin and his nobles were then baptized with many of the people, and thus Christianity was established in Northumbria.¹⁹ Christianity has never been admitted into any country in a manner more worthy of itself, or more creditable to the intellect of its converts. Both Ethelbert and Edwin received it like dispassionate sages. Their faith was the offspring of a judgment deliberate and just.

As from Ethelbert the sacred flame had proceeded to Saberct and to Edwin; so from Edwin it passed to his friend Eorpwald, the king of East Anglia. Redwald, the preceding sovereign, had been converted in Kent; but, on his return into East Anglia, his wife and friends induced him to palter with his Christianity. Desirous to please them, and to satisfy himself, he used two altars; one for his idols, and one for Christ.²⁰ Eorpwald, on his death, received and professed it with more constancy and understanding; but, on his death, the province relapsed into paganism for three years, till his brother, Sigebert, who had been banished into France, and there imbibed Christianity, restored it on his accession.²¹

In the reign of Cynegils, it was introduced into Wessex,²² which became the ascendant kingdom in the Saxon octarchy. Birinus obtained a commission from the pope to preach it to that part of the English who were still uninformed of it. His efforts seem to have been favoured by Oswald, king of Northumbria, who stood sponsor to Cynegils upon his baptism. Cenwalch, his son, was less favourable at first, but, returning from his exile, he adopted it again.

The midland Angles, a branch of Mercia, were led into Christianity under Peada.²³ His friend Alfrid impressed him with favourable sentiments of the Christian worship. The charms of Alhfleda, the daughter of Oswy, were refused to a pagan prince, and Peada may have listened to the Chris-

¹⁹ Bede, l. ii. c. 13, 14. ²⁰ Ib. 15. ²¹ Ib. ²² Ib. iii. 7. ²³ Ib. 21.

tian teachers with more earnestness, as she was to be his reward; but he declared that his acceptance of Christianity was sincere, even though he should be punished by her loss.

His father, Penda, was hostile to Christianity. His ferocious mind could not estimate the value of a system so benevolent; but he had the manly feeling of the virtue of consistency. From those who assumed the Christian faith he expected the Christian virtues. "I despise those miserable beings, who do not obey the God in whom they believe," was a just and rational satire.²⁴ The death of Penda removed the principal object to the general conversion of Mercia, and the election of Wulfhere completed its establishment.²⁵

The people of Essex, at the request of Oswy, king of Northumbria, again admitted the Christian teachers. Sigbercht the Little occasionally visited his friend in Northumbria, and Oswy held familiar colloquy with him on the sublime topic. He satirised the gods whom man could fabricate and destroy. He presented to his royal friend's contemplation the invisible Almighty and Eternal Being who created the universe, and governs it by his righteous providence; whose will it was the delight of reason to know, and the everlasting happiness of mankind to obey.²⁶

His mind, enlarged by these conferences, Sigbercht began to feel the value of Christianity. Cedd, a devout man, was, with another, invited out of Mercia to accompany him to Essex, and the nation yielded to their zeal. Some little variation ensued in a succeeding reign; but it was neither universal nor permanent.

Sussex was the last province in England which acceded to the revolution of its religious system. It then contained 7,000 families. Wulfhere, king of Mercia, influenced the mind of Edilwalch, the sovereign of Sussex, by his example and conversation; and, on his baptism, presented him with the Isle of Wight.

²⁴ Bede, iii. 21.²⁵ Ib. 24.²⁶ Ib. 22.

How long the Saxon paganism continued among individuals in each district, after it ceased to be the religious establishment of the Government, there are no materials for ascertaining. It was too irrational to have maintained a long contest with Christianity; but though it may have ceased to have its temples and priests, or any visible existence, yet the influence of its prejudices, and of the habits it had generated, continued long to operate. These became insensibly mixed with so much of Christianity as each understood, and produced that motley character in religion and morals, which was so often displayed in the Anglo-Saxon period.

But Christianity was a positive benefit to the nation, in every degree of its prevalence. Wherever it has penetrated, it has appeared like the Guardian Angel of the human race, meliorating the heart and enlightening the understanding.

Every part of its moral system is directed to soften the asperities of the human character, to remove its selfishness, to restrain its malignity, and to animate its virtues. If it did not eradicate all the vices of the individual by whom it was professed, it taught him to abandon many. It exhibited to the contemplation of all, the idea of what human nature ought to be, and may attain. It gradually implanted a moral sense in the bosom of all its converts, and taught the mind the habit of moral reasoning, and its application to life. It could not be known unless some portion of literature was attained or diffused. It therefore actually introduced learning into England, and taught the Anglo-Saxons to cultivate intellectual pursuits.

Christianity must have contributed greatly to the civilization of England, in its effects on the condition of the poorer classes of society. Before it appeared among the Anglo-Saxons, they had only exchanged the habits of external piracy for those of internal warfare and depredation. This great evil was perpetuated, because the poor had no means of subsistence but from the sword. Their trades being few, and in

no great request, there was no resource for those who were too numerous for the demands of agriculture, but to join those who had the power or the will to fight and plunder. Every covetous or turbulent noble was therefore always sure of troops of followers, who must execute his wishes, or starve. But when the Christian clergy were established, and monasteries arose, the poor were taken under their protection, and fed and nourished by their bounty, or by their influence on the bounty of others. The poor were thus gradually drawn away from robbery and bloodshed, and the fierce habits which they favoured declined as the support began to fail.

The effects of Christianity in diminishing the superstitions of the day, must have been also considerable. The credulous fancies of a barbarous people are very gross, and usually hold the understanding in chains, from which it is difficult to emerge. The conversion of the nation must have destroyed this brutish slavery, and greatly strengthened and enlarged its general intellect. But in nothing was the new religion more strikingly beneficial, than by introducing a moral and intellectual education. This could have neither been known nor understood till Christianity displayed the value, and produced the habit of adopting it.

The political effects of Christianity in England were as good as they could be in that age of general darkness; but it must be confessed that they were not so beneficial as its individual influence.

By rearing an ecclesiastical power, which at one time opposed the king, and at another the aristocracy of the chiefs, it certainly favoured the emancipation, and contributed much to produce the freedom of the people. But this power was not always exerted for the benefit of the nation. It was often made the instrument of ambition, or of foreign avarice.

These defects were the faults of the system into which Christianity was distorted, not of the religion inculcated by the

scriptures. Monkish Christianity was not Apostolic Christianity. We are certainly taught to make religion the governing principle of life; but not the exclusive principle. Formed by its Divine Author to influence and to adorn every class of society, Christianity mixes gracefully with all our becoming pleasures, and most usefully with all our necessary business. It forbids only those gratifications and pursuits which cannot be indulged without debasing ourselves or injuring others. It is not the gloomy ascetic, fasting into atrophy in the solitude of a desert; nor the melancholy or misanthropic monk, consuming life in delirious mortifications, or internal conflicts. Its discipline is the tuition of parental tenderness, only exacting of us to unite our happiness with virtue. But the system which the papal hierarchy established in England and in Europe, was an attempt to transfer the government of the world into the hands of ecclesiastics, under the name of Christianity, but by a complete departure from its spirit and precepts.

Instead of detailing the system of monkish and papal Christianity, we shall not detain the mind of the reader on this subject longer than to present to him the *Te Deum* and the *Jubilate* in the Anglo-Saxon.

THE TE DEUM.

The, God, we heriath, the, Drihten, we andettath.

The, æcne fæder, eal eorth ewurthath.

The, ealle englas, the, heofenas and ealle anwealdum.

The, cherubim and seraphim unablinndlice stefne clypath

Halig! Halig! Halig! drihten, God wereda!

Fulle synt heofenas and eorthe mægenthrymmes wuldres thines.

The, wuldorful erndracena wered,

The, witigena hergendlic getel,

The, cythra scyned herath here,

The, embhwyrft eorthena halig andet gesomnung,

Fæder, ormætes mægen-thrymmes!

BOOK
XIII.

Arwurthne thinne sothne and aulicne sunu ;
 Haligne witodlice frefrigendre Gast.
 Thu, cyng wuldres cyninges' Christe,
 Thu, fæderes ece thu eart sunu.
 Tha to alysenne thu anfenge mann, thu ne ascunedost
 fæmnan innath.
 Thu oferswithedum deathes angan ; Thu onllydest gelyfe-
 dum ricu heofena.
 Thu on tha swithran healfe Godes setst on wuldre fæderes.
 Dema thu eart gelyfed wesán toweard,
 The eornostlice we halsiath thinum theowum gehelp, tha of
 deorwyrthum blode thu alydest.
 Ece do mid halgum thinum wuldor beon forgyfen.
 Hal do folc thin ; and bletsa yrfeweardnysse thine.
 And gerece hy and upahof hy oth on ecnecnysse.
 Thurh syndrige dagas we bletsiaþ the
 And we heriaþ naman thinne on worulde and a woruld.
 Gemedema dæge thisum buton synne us gehealdan.
 Gemiltsa ure, Gemiltsa.
 Sy mildheortnys thin ofer us swa swa we hyhtath on the.
 On the ic hihte ; ic ne beo geseynd on ecnysse.²⁷

THE JUBILATE.

Drymath drihtne ealle eorthan ; theowiath drihtne on blisse ;
 Ingath on gesihthe his on blithnesse.
 Witath fortham the drihten he is God ; he worhte us, and
 na we sylfe us ; folc his and sceap fostornoths his
 Ingath gatu his on anddetnesse, cafertunas his on ymenum
 anddettath
 Heriaþ namam his ; fortham the wynsum is drihten, on
 ecnesse mildheortnes his, and oth on cynrene and cynrene
 sothfæstness his.²⁸

²⁷ MS. Cott. Lib. Vespasian A. 1.²⁸ MS. Cott. Vitell. E. 18. Another ver-
sion from Vespas. A. 1. may be seen inWanley's excellent Catalogue of the Saxon
MSS. p. 222.

THE
HISTORY
OF THE
ANGLO-SAXONS.

BOOK XIV.

Their Language.

CHAP. I.

On the Structure or Mechanism of the Anglo-Saxon Language.

TO explain the history of any language is a task peculiarly difficult at this period of the world, in which we are so very remote from the era of its original construction.

CHAP.

I.

We have as yet witnessed no people in the act of forming their language, and cannot therefore from experience demonstrate the simple elements from which a language begins, nor the additional organization which it gradually receives. The languages of highly civilized people, which are those that we are most conversant with, are in a state very unlike their ancient tongues. Many words have been added to them from other languages; many have deviated into meanings very different from their primitive significations; many have been so altered by the changes of pronunciation and orthography, as scarcely to bear any resemblance to their ancient form. The abbreviations of language, which have been usually called its articles, pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions, adverbs, and interjections; the inflections of its verbs, the declensions of

its nouns, and the very form of its syntax, have also undergone so many alterations from the caprice of human usage, that it is impossible to discern any thing of the mechanism of a language but by ascending from its present state to its more ancient form.

The Anglo-Saxon is one of those ancient languages to which we may successfully refer, in our inquiries how language has been constructed.

As we have not had the experience of any people forming a language, we cannot attain to a knowledge of its mechanism in any other way than by analysing it; by arranging its words into their different classes, and by tracing these to their elementary sources. We shall perhaps be unable to discover the original words with which the language began, but we may hope to trace the progress of its formation, and some of the principles on which that progress has been made. In this inquiry I shall follow the steps of the author of the *Diversions of Purley*, and build upon his foundations; because I think that his book has presented to us the key to that mechanism which we have so long admired, so fruitlessly examined, and so little understood.

Words have been divided into nine classes: the article; the substantive or noun; the pronoun; the adjective; the verb; the adverb; the preposition; the conjunction; and the interjection.

Under these classes all the Saxon words may be arranged, although not with that scientific precision with which the classifications of natural history have been made. Mr. Tooke has asserted that in all languages there are only two sorts of words necessary for the communication of our thoughts, and therefore only two parts of speech, the noun and the verb, and that the others are the abbreviations of these. That nouns and verbs are the most essential and primitive words of language, and that all others have been formed from them, are universal facts, which, after reading the *Diversions of*

Purley, and tracing in other languages the application of the principles there maintained, no enlightened philologist will now deny. But though this is true as to the *origin* of these parts of speech, it may be questioned whether the names established by conventional use may not be still properly retained, because the words now classed as conjunctions, prepositions, &c., though originally verbs, are not verbs at present, but have been long separated from their verbal parents, and have become distinct parts of our grammatical syntax.

That the conjunctions, the prepositions, the adverbs, and the interjections of our language, have been made from our verbs and nouns, Mr. Tooke has satisfactorily shewn: and with equal truth he has affirmed, that articles and pronouns have proceeded from the same source. The same may be affirmed of adjectives. Nouns and verbs are the parents of all the rest of language, and it can be proved in the Anglo-Saxon, as in other tongues, that of these the nouns are the ancient and primitive stock from which all other words have branched and vegetated.

The Anglo-Saxon adjectives may be first noticed.

The adjectives, which are or have been participles, have obviously originated from verbs, and they are by no means an inconsiderable number.

Adjectives which have been formed from participles, as *aberendlic*, *bebeodenlic*, &c. are referable to the same source.

But the large proportion of adjectives are either nouns used as adjectives,¹ or are nouns with an additional syllable. These additional syllables are or have been meaning words.

Lic is an Anglo-Saxon word, which implies similitude, and is a termination which includes a large class of adjectives.²

¹ As *lath*, evil, also pernicious; *leng*, length, also long; *hige*, diligence, also diligent, &c.

² As *ceorlic*, vulgar, *ceorl-lic*; *cildlic*, childlike, *cild-lic*; *circlic*, ecclesiastical, *circ-lic*; *cræftlic*, workmanlike, *cræft-lic*; *freolic*, free, *freo-* (a lord) *lic*; *freondlic*, friendly, *freond-lic*; *godlic*, divine, *god-lic*; *gramulic*, furious, *grama-* (anger) *lic*; *fænl-lic*, muddy, *fen-lic*, &c.

Another large class may be ranged under the ending *leas*, which implies loss or diminution.³

Another class of adjectives is formed by adding the word *sum*, which expresses a degree or portion of a thing.⁴

Other adjectives are made by putting the word *full* at the end of nouns.⁵

A large collection of them might be made, which consist of nouns, and the syllable *ig*, as *blod-ig*, bloody; *clif-ig*, rocky; *cræft-ig*, skilful. Other adjectives are composed of a noun and *cund*; others of a noun and *bær*, &c. &c.

After these examples, it will be unnecessary to go through all the classes of adjectives to shew that they are either participles of verbs, or have sprung from nouns. Every one who takes that trouble will be convinced of the fact. I will only remark, that the Saxon comparative degree is usually formed by the addition of *er*. Now *er* or *ær* is a word which implies priority, and is therefore very expressively used to denote that degree of superiority which the comparative degree is intended to affirm. So *est*, which is the termination of the Saxon superlatives, is a noun which expresses munificence or abundance. *Tir* is a præfix which makes a superlative, and *tir* signifies supremacy and lordship.

The Anglo-Saxon VERBS have essentially contributed to form those parts of speech which Mr. Tooke has denominated the abbreviations of language. The verbs, however, are not themselves the primitive words of our language. They are all in a state of composition. They are like the secondary mountains of the earth—they have been formed posterior to the ancient bulwarks of human speech, which are the nouns—I mean of course those nouns which are in their elementary state.

In some languages, as in the Hebrew, the verbs are very often the nouns applied unaltered to a verbal signification. We have

³ As *carleas*, void of care, *car-leas*; *cræft-leas*, ignorant, *cræft-leas*; *facenleas*, not deceitful, *facen-leas*; *feoh-leas*, moneyless, *dream-leas*, joyless, &c.

⁴ As *fremsum*, benign, *freme-sum*; *winsum*, joyful, &c.

⁵ As *facen-ful*, deceitful; *deore-full*, dark; *ege-full*, fearful, &c.

examples of this sort of verbs in our English words, love, hate, fear, hope, dream, sleep, &c. These words are nouns, and are also used as verbs. Of verbs thus made by the simple application of nouns in a verbal form, the Anglo-Saxon gives few examples.

Almost all its other verbs are nouns with a final syllable added, and this final syllable is a word expressive of motion, or action, or possession.

To shew this fact we will take some of the Anglo-Saxon verbs:

Bad, <i>a pledge.</i>	bad-ian, <i>to pledge.</i>
bær, <i>a bier.</i>	bær-an, <i>to carry.</i>
bæth, <i>a bath.</i>	bæth-ian, <i>to wash.</i>
bat, <i>a club.</i>	beat-an, <i>to beat.</i>
bebod, <i>a command.</i>	bebod-an, <i>to command.</i>
bidde, <i>a prayer.</i>	bidd-an, <i>to pray.</i>
big, <i>a crown.</i>	big-an, <i>to bend.</i>
bliss, <i>joy.</i>	bliss-ian, <i>to rejoice.</i>
blostm, <i>a flower.</i>	blostm-ian, <i>to blossom.</i>
blot, <i>a sacrifice.</i>	blot-an, <i>to sacrifice.</i>
bod, <i>an edict.</i>	bod-ian, <i>to proclaim.</i>
borg, <i>a loan.</i>	borg-ian, <i>to lend.</i>
bridl, <i>a bridle.</i>	bridl-ian, <i>to bridle.</i>
broc, <i>misery.</i>	broc-ian, <i>to afflict.</i>
bye, <i>an habitation.</i>	by-an, <i>to inhabit.</i>
byseg, <i>business.</i>	bysg-ian, <i>to be busy.</i>
bysmr, <i>contumely.</i>	bysmr-ian, <i>to deride.</i>
bytl, <i>a builder.</i>	bytl-ian, <i>to build.</i>
car, <i>care.</i>	car-ian, <i>to be anxious.</i>
ceap, <i>cattle.</i>	ceap-ian, <i>to buy.</i>
cele, <i>cold.</i>	cel-an, <i>to cool.</i>
cerre, <i>a bending.</i>	cerr-an, <i>to return.</i>
cid, <i>strife.</i>	cid-an, <i>to quarrel.</i>
cnyt, <i>a knot.</i>	cnytt-an, <i>to tie.</i>
comp, <i>a battle.</i>	comp-ian, <i>to fight.</i>
cræft, <i>art.</i>	cræft-an, <i>to build.</i>
curs, <i>a curse.</i>	curs-ian, <i>to curse.</i>
cwid, <i>a saying.</i>	cwydd-ian, <i>to say.</i>
cym, <i>a noise.</i>	cym-an, <i>to cry out.</i>
cyth, <i>knowledge.</i>	cyth-an, <i>to make known.</i>
cos, <i>a kiss.</i>	cyss-an, <i>to kiss.</i>
dæl, <i>a part.</i>	dæl-an, <i>to divide.</i>
dæg, <i>day.</i>	dæg-ian, <i>to shine.</i>
deag, <i>colour.</i>	deag-an, <i>to tinge.</i>

If we go through all the alphabet, we shall find that most of the verbs are composed of a noun, and the syllables an, ian, or gan. Of these additional syllables, gan is the verb of motion, to go, or the verb agan, to possess; and an seems sometimes the abbreviation of anan, to give,⁶ and sometimes of the verbs gan and agan. Thus deagan, to tinge, appears to me deag-an, to give a colour; dælan, to divide, dæl-an, to give a part; cossan, to kiss, cos-an, to give a kiss; cursian, to curse, curs-an, to give a curse: while we may presume that carian, to be anxious, is car-agan, to have care; blostmian, to blossom, is blostm-agan, to have a flower; byan, to inhabit, is by-agan, to have a habitation. We may also say that cidan, to quarrel, is the abbreviation of cid-gan, to go to quarrel; bæthian, to wash, is bæth-gan, to go to a bath; biddan, to pray, is bidde-gan, to go to pray. The Gothic to pray, is bidgan.

That the words gan, or agan, have been abbreviated or softened into an, or ian, can be proved from several verbs. Thus fylgan, or filigian, to follow, is also filian. Thus fleogan, to fly, becomes also fleon and fliön. So forhtigan, to be afraid, has become also forhtian. So fundigan has become fundian; gethyldgian, gethyldian; fengan, foan and fon; and teogan, teon. The examples of this change are innumerable.

This abbreviation is also proved by many of the participles of the abbreviated verbs ending in gend, thus shewing the original infinitive to have been gen; as frefrian, to comfort, has its participle frefergend; fremian, to profit, freomigend; fulian has fuligend; gæmnian, gæmnigend, &c.

Many verbs are composed of the terminations above mentioned, and of words which exist in the Anglo-Saxon, not as nouns but as adjectives, and of some words which are not to be met with in the Anglo-Saxon, either as nouns or adjectives. But so true is the principle, that nouns were the primitive

⁶ It is probable that anan is a double infinitive, like gangan, to go, and that an is the original infinitive of the verb to give.

words of these verbs, and that verbs are but the nouns with the additional final syllables, that we shall very frequently find the noun we search for existing in the state of a noun in some of those languages which have a close affinity with the Anglo-Saxon. This language meets our eye in a very advanced state, and therefore when we decompose it we cannot expect to meet in itself all its elements. Many of its elements had dropped out of its vocabulary at that period wherein we find it, just as in modern English we have dropped a great number of the words of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors. In this treatise, which the necessary limits of my publication compel me to make very concise, I can only be expected to give a few instances.

Beran is to bring forth, or produce; there is no primitive noun answering to this verb in the Anglo-Saxon, but there is in the Franco-theotisc, where we find *bar* is fruit, or whatever the earth produces: *ber-an* is therefore to give fruit, or to produce. So *mærsian*, to celebrate, is from *segan*, to speak, and some noun from which the adjective *mæra*, illustrious, had been formed. The noun is not in the Saxon, but it is in the Franco-theotisc, where *mera*, is fame, or rumor; therefore *mærsian*, to celebrate a person, is *mera-segan*, to speak his fame. I have observed many examples of this sort.

In searching for the original nouns from which verbs have been formed, we must always consider if the verb we are inquiring about be a primitive verb or a secondary verb, containing either of the præfixes *a*, *be*, *ge*, *for*, *on*, *in*, *to*, *with*, &c. &c. In these cases, we must strip the verb of its præfix, and examine its derivation under its earlier form. The verbs with a præfix are obviously of later origin than the verbs to which the præfix has not been applied.

Sometimes the verb consists of two verbs put together, as *gan-gan*, to go; so *for-letan*, to dismiss or leave, is composed of two verbs, *faran*, to go, *lætan*, to let or suffer, and is literally to let go.

The Anglo-Saxon nouns are not all of the same antiquity,

some are the primitive words of the language from which every other has branched, but some are of later date.

We have mentioned the nouns of which the adjectives and the verbs have been formed. Such nouns are among the earliest of the language. But the more ancient nouns having been applied to form the adjectives and the verbs, a more recent series of nouns has been made by subjoining new terminations to the adjectives and verbs. Thus we have traced the noun *car* to the adjective *car-full*. But this adjective, having been thus formed, has become the basis of a new substantive, by the addition of the syllable *nysse*, and thus we have *carfulnysse*. In the same way the new noun *carleasness* has been made. So *facenfulness*, &c. &c.

A great many nouns have been made from verbs; as, *gearcung*, preparation, from *gearcian*, to prepare; *gearnung*, earning, from *gearnian*, to earn; *geascung*, an asking, from *geascian*, to ask; *gebicnung*, a presage, from *gebicnian*, to shew, &c.

A new set of secondary nouns has been made by combining two more ancient nouns. Thus *accorn*, an acorn, is made up of *ac*, an oak and *corn*, and thus *accorn* is literally the corn of the oak; so *ceapscipa* is a merchant ship; *ceapman* a merchant, from *ceap*, originally cattle, and afterwards property, or business; and the other nouns, *scipa*, a ship; and *man*, a man. Thus *ceasterwara*, citizens, literally *ceaster*, a city, and *wara*, men. So *burg-wara*, citizens, from *burg* and *wara*. So *eorldom*, freondscip, &c.

A great many secondary nouns has been made by adding nouns of meaning terminations, which are in fact other nouns, as *esse*, or *nesse*; *eld*; *er*; *ing*; *leaste*; *dom*, *rice*, *had*; *scipe*; *scire*.

A very large proportion of nouns has been made by applying the primitive noun in a variety of figurative meanings. Thus originally *ceap*, cattle, came afterwards to express business, also sale, and also food. So *cniht*, a boy, a servant, a

youth, a disciple, a client, and a soldier; craft, art, is also workmanship, strength, power, and cunning. But an hundred examples might be adduced on this topic.

CHAP.

I.

This view of the decomposition of the Anglo-Saxon language exhibits the same principles of mechanism which may be found in other languages. They appear very conspicuously in the Welsh language, which, from the long seclusion of the Welsh nation, has retained more of its ancient form than any other language now spoken in Europe. They may be also seen in the Gaelic.

Having thus succinctly exhibited the Anglo-Saxon language in a state of decomposition, we may form some notion of its mechanism and progress.

The primitive nouns expressing sensible objects, having been formed, they were multiplied by combinations with each other. They were then applied to express ideas more abstracted. By adding to them a few expressive syllables, the numerous classes of verbs and adjectives arose; and from these again other nouns and adjectives were formed. The nouns and verbs were then abbreviated and adapted into conjunctions, prepositions, adverbs, and interjections. The pronouns were soon made from a sense of their convenience; and out of these came the articles. To illustrate these principles, from the various languages which I have examined, would expand these few pages into a volume, and would be therefore improper; but I can recommend the subject to the attention of the philological student, with every assurance of a successful research.

The multiplication of language by the metaphorical application of nouns to express other nouns, or to signify adjectives, may be observed in all languages. Thus, beorht, light, was applied to express bright, shining, and illustrious. So deop, the sea, was applied to express depth.

As a specimen how the Anglo-Saxon language has been formed from the multiplication of simple words, I will shew

the long train of words which have been formed from a few primitive words. I select four of the words applicable to the mind. The numerous terms formed from them will illustrate the preceding observations on the mechanism of the language.

Ancient noun :

Hyge, or hige, *mind or thought.*

Secondary meaning :—*care, diligence, study.*

Hoga, *care.*

Hogu, *care, industry, effort.*

Adjective, being the noun so applied :

hige, *diligent, studious, attentive.*

hoga, *prudent, solicitous.*

Verbs from the noun :

hogian, *to meditate, to study, to think, to be wise, to be anxious ; and hence to groan.*

hygian, } *to study, to be solicitous, to endeavour.*
hyggan, }

The verb, by use, having gained new shades of meaning and applications, we meet with it again ; as,

hiegan, } *to study, to explore, to seek vehemently, to endeavour, to struggle.*
hycgan, }

Secondary noun derived from the verb ;

hogung, *care, effort, endeavour.*

Secondary nouns compounded of the ancient noun and another :

higecraeft, *acuteness of mind.*

higeleast, *negligence, carelessness.*

higesorga, *anxieties, mental griefs.*

hogascip, } *prudence.*
hogoscip, }

hygeleast, *folly, madness, scurrility.*

hygesceaft, *the mind or thought.*

Adjectives composed of the ancient noun and a meaning word :

hygelease, *void of mind, foolish.*

hyge rof, } *magnanimous, excellent in mind.*
hige rof, }

hogfæst, } *prudent.*
hogofæst, }

hogfull, *anxious, full of care.*
hige frod, *wise, prudent in mind.*
hige leas, *negligent, incurious.*
hige strang, *strong in mind.*
hige thancle, *cautious, provident, thoughtful.*

Adverbs from the adjective:

higeleas lice, *negligently, incuriously.*
hogfull lice, *anxiously.*

Ancient noun:

MOD, *the mind; also passion and irritability.*

Verb:

modian, } *to be high minded.*
modigan, } *to rage.*
modgian, } *to swell.*

Adjectives composed of the noun and another word or syllable:

modeg, } *irritable.*
modig, } *angry, proud.*
modful, *full of mind, irritable.*
modga, *elated, proud, distinguished.*
modhwata, *fervid in mind.*
modilic, *magnanimous.*
mod leas, *weak-minded, pusillanimous.*
mod stathol, *firm-minded.*
modthwer, *patient in mind, meek, mild.*

Secondary nouns composed of the ancient noun and some other:

mod gethanc, *thoughts of the mind, council.*
mod gethoht, *strength of mind, reasoning.*
mod gewinne, *conflicts of mind.*
modes mynla, *the affections of the mind—the inclinations.*
modhete, *heat of mind—anger.*
modleaste, *folly, pusillanimity, slothfulness.*
modnesse, *pride.*
modsefa, *the intellect—sensation—intelligence.*
mod sorg, *grief of mind.*

Secondary nouns of still later origin, having been formed after the adjectives, and composed of an adjective and another noun:

modignesse,
modinesse, *moodiness, pride, animosity.*

BOOK
XIV.

mod seocnesse, *sickness of mind.*

mod statholnysse, *firmness of mind, fastitude.*

mod sumnesse, *concord.*

modthærnesse, *patience, meekness.*

Adverb formed from the adjective:

modiglice, *proudly, angrily.*

The ancient noun:

WIT, } *the mind—genius—the intellect—the sense.*
Gewit, }

Secondary meaning:—*wisdom—prudence.*

Noun applied as an adjective:

wita,

wite, *wise—skilful.*

Gewita, *conscious*; hence a witness.

Verb formed from the noun:

witan, *to know, to perceive.*

gewitan, *to understand.*

witegian, *to prophecy.*

Adjectives composed of the ancient noun, and an additional syllable or word:

wittig, *wise, skilled, ingenious, prudent.*

ge-witig, *knowing, wise, intelligent.*

ge witleas, *ignorant, foolish.*

ge wittig, *intelligent, conscious.*

ge witscoc, *ill in mind, demoniac.*

witol, wittol, *wise, knowing.*

Secondary nouns formed of the ancient noun and another noun:

witedom, *the knowledge of judgment, prediction.*

witega, *a prophet.*

witegung, *prophecy.*

wite saga, *a prophet.*

gewitleast, *folly, madness.*

ge wit loca, *the mind.*

ge witness, *witness.*

gewitscipe, *witness.*

wite clofe, *trifles.*

witword, *the answer of the wise.*

Nouns of more recent date, having been formed out of the adjectives :

gewitseocness, *insanity*.
 witigdom, *knowledge, wisdom, prescience*.
 witolnesse, *knowledge, wisdom*.

Secondary adjective, or one formed upon the secondary noun :

witedomlic, *prophetical*.

Conjunctions :

witedlice, }
 witodlice, } *indeed, for, but, to wit.*

Adverbs formed from participles and adjectives :

witendlice, *knowingly*.
 wittiglice,

Ancient noun :

GE-THANC, } *the mind, thought, opinion.*
 Ge-thonc, }
 thank, } *the will.*
 thonc, } *thought.*

Secondary meaning :—*an act of the will, or thanks.*

thing, }
 gething, } *a council.*

And from the consequence conferred by sitting at the council, came

gethinceth, *honour, dignity*.

Verbs formed from the noun :

thincan, } *to think, to conceive, to feel, to reason, to consider.*
 thencan, }
 gethencan, } *to think.*
 gethengcan, }
 thancian, } *to thank.*
 gethancian, }
 thingan, *to address, to speak, to supplicate.*
 gethancmetan, *to consider.*

Adjectives formed from the ancient noun :

thancol, } *thoughtful, meditating, cautious.*
 thoncol, }
 ge thancol, *mindful.*
 thancful, *thankful, ingenious, content.*
 thancwurth, *grateful.*
 thancolmod, *provident, wise.*

BOOK
XIV.

Secondary noun formed from the verb:

thoht, } *thinking, thought.*
 gethoht, }
 getheaht, *council.*
 getheahtere, *counsellor.*
 thankung, *thankings.*
 thancmetuncg, *deliberation.*

Secondary verb, from one of these secondary nouns:

getheahtian, *to consult.*

More recent noun, formed from the secondary verb:

getheahting, *council—consultation.*

Another secondary verb:

Ymbethencan, *to think about any thing.*

Adjective from a secondary verb:

getheahtendlic, *consulting.*

Adverb from one of the adjectives:

thancwurthlice, *gratefully.*

CHAP. II.

On the Originality of the Anglo-Saxon Language.

IT is difficult to ascertain the originality of the Saxon language; because, however rude the people who used it may have appeared to us, it is a fact that their language comes to us in a very cultivated shape.

CHAP.
II.

Its cultivation is not only proved by its copiousness—by its numerous synonymes—by the declension of its nouns—the conjugation of its verbs—its abbreviated verbs, or conjunctions, adverbs, and prepositions, and its epithets or adjectives; but also by its immense number of compound words applying to every shade of meaning.

By the Anglo-Saxon appearing to us in a state so advanced, it is very difficult to ascertain its originality. It is difficult, when we find words corresponding with those of other languages, to distinguish those which it originally had, like the terms of other tongues, and those which it has imported.

The conjugation of its substantive verb, however, proves that it is by no means in its state of original purity; for instead of this being one verb, with inflections of itself throughout its tenses, it is composed of the fragments of no fewer than five substantive verbs, the primitive terms of which appear in other languages. The fragments of these five words are huddled together in the Anglo-Saxon, and thus make up its usual conjugations.

To perceive this curious fact, it will be useful to recollect the same verb in the Greek and Latin.

In the Greek the verb *εἶμι* is regularly deflected through almost all its tenses and persons. In the Latin it is otherwise. We begin these with *sum*, and pass directly to the

BOOK inflections of another word more like the Greek *εἰμι*; but the
XIV. inflections of *sum* are frequently intermixed. Thus,

Sum,	sumus.
es,	estis.
est,	sunt.

Here we see at one glance two verbs deflecting; the one into *sum, sumus, sunt*; the other into *es, est, estis*. In the imperfect and future tenses *eram* and *ero*, we see one of the verbs continuing; but in the perfect, *fui*, a new deflecting verb suddenly appears to us:

fui, fuisti, fuit, fuimus, fuistis, fuerunt.

In another of its tenses we have the curious exhibition of two of the former verbs being joined together to make a new inflection; as,

fuero, fueris, fuerit, &c.

This is literally a combination of *fui* and *ero*; which indeed its meaning implies, “*I shall have been.*”

The Anglo-Saxon substantive verb is also composed out of several verbs. We can trace no fewer than five in its different inflections.

I am, eom, eart, ys, synd, synd, synd.

I was, wæs, wære, wæs, wæron, wæron, wæron.

beo, byst, byth, beoth, beoth, beoth.

The infinitive is *beon, or wesan, to be.*

These are the common inflections of the above tenses; but we sometimes find the following variations:

for *I am*, we sometimes have *com, am, om, beo, ar, sy*;

for *thou art*, we have occasionally *eart, arth, bist, es, sy*;

for *he is*, we have *ys, bith, sy*;

and for the plural we have *synd, syndon, synt, sien, beoth, and bithon.*

In these inflections we may distinctly see five verbs, whose conjugations are intermixed:

eom, es, ys, are of one family, and resemble the Greek *εἶμι*.

ar, arth, and am, are, proceed from another parent, and and are not unlike the Latin *eram*.

sy, sy, sy, synd, are from another, and recal to our minds the Latin *sum* and *sunt*.

wæs, wære, wæs, wæron, seem referable to another branch, of which the infinitive, *wesan*, was retained in the Anglo-Saxon.

beon, bist, bith, beoth, belong to a distinct family, whose infinitive, *beon*, was kept in use.

But it is curious to consider the source of the last verb, *beo* and *beon*, which the Flemings and Germans retain in *ik ben* and *ich bin*, *I am*.

The verb *beo* seems to have been derived from the Cimmerian or Celtic language, which was the earliest that appeared in Europe; because the Welsh, which has retained most of this tongue, has the infinitive, *bod*, and some of its inflections. The perfect tense is

bum, buost, bu, buam, buac, buant.

The Anglo-Saxon article is also compounded of two words; as

Nom. *Se, seo, that*.

Gen. *thæs, thære, this*.

Dat. *tham, thære, tham*.

Acc. *thone, tha, that*.

Se and *that* are obviously distinct words.

When we consider these facts, and the many Anglo-Saxon nouns which can be traced into other languages, it cannot be affirmed that the Anglo-Saxon exhibits to us an original language. It is an ancient language, and has preserved much of the primitive form; but a large portion of it seems to have been made up from other ancient languages.

CHAP. III.

*On the Copiousness of the Saxon Language.*BOOK
XIV.

THIS language has been thought to be a very rude and barren tongue, incapable of expressing any thing but the most simple and barbarous ideas. The truth, however, is, that it is a very copious language, and is capable of expressing any subject of human thought. In the technical terms of those arts and sciences which have been discovered, or much improved, since the Norman Conquest, it must of course be deficient. But books of history, belles lettres, and poetry, may be now written in it, with considerable precision and correctness, and even with much discrimination, and some elegance of expression.

The Saxon abounds with synonymes. I will give a few instances of those which my memory can supply. To express

Man.

man.

nith.

fira.

calla.

guma.

hæleth.

wer.

rinc.

folc.

Secgelderbarnum.

Woman.

ides.

wyf.

femne.

megth.

ewe.

meowla.

blæd.

mennen.

piga.

Gebedda.

For persons possessing power and authority they used

waldende.

brego.

brema.

brytta.

frea.

tyr.

hold.

theodne.

tohtan.

baldor.

frumgara.

drihten.

ealdor.

hlaford.

beorn.

wetha.

here.

reswa.

Besides the compounds

folces reswan.
folc togan.
wigina balder.
burga ealdor.
rice man.

leodhata.
heathorinc.
leoda reswan.
æthelboren.
frymtha waldend.

And besides the official names of

cyning.
ealdorman.
heretogas.

eorl.
thegn.
gesithcundeman, &c.

For property they had in use the terms

yrfe.
reaf.
æhta.
feoh.

sceat.
sinc.
ceap.

Besides the metaphors from the metals and coins.

In a poem we find the following synonymous terms used to express convivial shouting:

hlydde.
hlyned.
dyned.

strymde.
gelyde.

To the mind we find several words appropriated:

mod.
gethanc.
ferth.
hige.
hrether.
gewit loca.

sefa.
mod-sefa.
gemynd.
gefræge.
ge wit.
runcofa.

higesceft.
ingehygd.
mod-gethoht.
gethoht.
orthanc.
andgit.

For knowledge and learning they had list, crœft, leornung, leornesse.

For the sea,

brym.
loge.
sæ.
ea.
flode.

mære.
yth.
garsecg.
stream.
willflod.

egstream.
wæteres.
holm.
sewe.

Besides numerous metaphors; as

Swan rade.
Ganotes bath, &c.

For poetry and song,

leoth.

fitt.

gyd.

sang.

dreamnesse.

gethwere.

spell.

They had a great number of words for a ship ; and to express the Supreme they used more words and phrases than I can recollect to have seen in any other language.

Indeed the copiousness of their language was receiving perpetual additions from the lays of their poets. I have already mentioned that the great features of their poetry were metaphor and periphrasis. On these they prided themselves. To be fluent in these was the great object of their emulation ; the great test of their merit. Hence Cedmon, in his account of the deluge, uses near thirty synonymous words and phrases to express the ark.* They could not attain this desired end without making new words and phrases by new compounds, and most of these became naturalized in the language. The same zeal for novelty of expression led them to borrow words from every other language which came within their reach.

We have a specimen of the power of the language in Elfric's Saxon Grammar, in which we may perceive that he finds Saxon words for the abstruse distinctions and definitions of grammar. A few may be added.

verbum

accidentia

significatio

actio

passio

tempus

modus

species

figura

conjugatio

persona

numerus

anomala

word.

gelimplic thing.

getacnunge.

dæde.

throwinge.

tid.

ge met.

hiw.

gefegednyss.

getheodnyss.

had.

getel.

unemne.

* See before p. 280.

inequalis

ungelic.

defectiva

ateorigendlic.

frequentativa

gelomlæcende.

inchoativa

onginnendlic.

To express indeclinables the natural resources of the language failed him, and he adopts the Latin word, and gives it a saxonized form.

The astronomical treatises which have been already mentioned shew a considerable power in the language to express even matters of science.

But the great proof of the copiousness and power of the Anglo-Saxon language may be had from considering our own English, which is principally Saxon. It may be interesting to shew this by taking some lines of our principal authors, and marking in *Italics* the Saxon words they contain.

SHAKESPEAR.

*To be or not to be, that is the question ;
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The stings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? To die, to sleep ;
No more ! and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ach, and the thousand natural shocks
The flesh is heir to ! 'twere a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die ; to sleep ;
To sleep? perchance to dream!*

MILTON.

*With thee conversing I forget all time,
All seasons, and their change ; all please alike.
Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,
With charm of earliest birds ; pleasant the sun
When first on this delightful land he spreads
His orient beams on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,
Glistening with dew ; fragrant the fertile earth
After soft showers ; and sweet the coming on
Of grateful evening mild ; then silent night
With this her solemn bird, and this fair moon,
And these the gems of heaven, her starry train.*

^a MS. Cot. Lib. Julius A. 2.

Mark that swift arrow ! how it cuts the air.

How it outruns the following eye !

Use all persuasions now and try

If thou canst call it back, or stay it there.

That way it went ; but thou shalt find

No track is left behind.

Fool ! 'tis thy life, and the fond archer thou.

Of all the time thou'st shot away

I'll bid thee fetch but yesterday,

And it shall be too hard a task to do.

Translators of the BIBLE.

And they made ready the present against Joseph came at noon : for they heard that they should eat bread there. And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth. And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake ? Is he yet alive ? And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance. And he lift up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me ? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son. Gen. xliii. 25—29.

Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit and was troubled. And said, Where have ye laid him ? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him ! John, xi. 32—36.

THOMSON.

These as they change, Almighty Father ! these

Are but the varied God. The rolling year

Is full of thee. Forth in the pleasing spring

Thy beauty walks, thy tenderness and love.

Wide flush the fields ; the soft'ning air is balm,

Echo the mountains round ; the forest smiles ;

And every sense and every heart is joy.

Then comes thy glory in the summer months,

With light and heat refulgent. Then thy sun

Shoots full perfection through the swelling year.

ADDISON.

CHAP.
III.

I was yesterday, about sun-set, walking in the open fields, till the night insensibly fell upon me. I at first amused myself with all the richness and variety of colours which appeared in the western parts of heaven. In proportion as they faded away and went out, several stars and planets appeared, one after another, till the whole firmament was in a glow. The blueness of the æther was exceedingly heightened and enlivened by the season of the year.

SPENSER.

*Hard is the doubt, and difficult to deem,
When all three kinds of love together meet,
And do dispart the heart with power extreme,
Whether shall weigh the balance down; to weet
The dear affection unto kindred sweet,
Or raging fire of love to woman kind,
Or zeal of friends, combin'd with virtues meet:
But of them all the band of virtuous mind
Me seems the gentle heart should most assured bind.*

Book iv. c. 9.

LOCKE.

Every man, being conscious to himself, that he thinks, and that, which his mind is applied about whilst thinking, being the ideas that are there; it is past doubt, that men have in their minds several ideas. Such as are those expressed by the words, whiteness, hardness, sweetness, thinking, motion, man, elephant, army, drunkenness, and others. It is in the first place, then, to be inquired, How he comes by them? I know it is a received doctrine that men have native ideas, and original characters stamped upon their minds in their very first being.

Locke's Essay, Book xi. ch. 1.

POPE.

*How happy is the blameless vestal's lot?
The world forgetting, by the world forgot;
Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind!
Each pray'r accepted, and each wish resign'd;
Labour and rest that equal periods keep;
Obedient slumbers that can wake and weep;
Desires compos'd, affections ever ev'n;
Tears that delight, and sighs that waft to heav'n.
Grace shines around her with serenest beams,
And whispering angels prompt her golden dreams:
For her th' unfading rose of Eden blooms,
And wings of seraphs shed divine perfumes.*

YOUNG.

*Let Indians, and the gay, like Indians, fond
Of feather'd fopperies, the sun adore;
Darkness has more divinity for me;
It strikes thought inward; it drives back the soul
To settle on herself, our point supreme.
There lies our theatre: there sits our judge.
Darkness the curtain drops o'er life's dull scene;
'Tis the kind hand of Providence stretch'd out
'Twixt man and vanity; 'tis reason's reign,
And virtue's too; these tutelary shades
Are man's asylum from the tainted throng.
Night is the good man's friend, and guardian too.
It no less rescues virtue, than inspires.*

SWIFT.

Wisdom is a fox, who, after long hunting, will at last cost you the pains to dig out. 'Tis a cheese, which by how much the richer has the thicker, the homelier, and the coarser coat; and whereof, to a judicious palate, the maggots are the best. 'Tis a sack posset, wherein the deeper you go you will find it the sweeter. But then, lastly, 'tis a nut, which, unless you chuse with judgment, may cost you a tooth, and pay you with nothing but a worm.

ROBERTSON.

This great emperor, in the plenitude of his power, and in possession of all the honors which can flatter the heart of man, took the extraordinary resolution to resign his kingdom; and to withdraw entirely from any concern in business or the affairs of this world, in order that he might spend the remainder of his days in retirement and solitude.—Dioclesian is perhaps the only prince, capable of holding the reins of government, who ever resigned them from deliberate choice, and who continued during many years to enjoy the tranquillity of retirement, without fetching one penitent sigh, or casting back one look of desire towards the power or dignity which he had abandoned.

Cha. V.

HUME.

The beauties of her person, and graces of her air, combined to make her the most amiable of women; and the charms of her address and conversation, aided the impression which her lovely figure made on the heart of all beholders. Ambitious and active in her temper, yet inclined to cheerfulness and society; of a lofty spirit, constant and even vehement in her purpose, yet politic, gentle, and affable, in her demeanor, she seemed to partake only so much of the male virtues as to render her estimable, without relinquishing those soft graces which compose the proper ornament of her sex.

GIBBON.

CHAP.
III.

In the second century of the Christian æra the empire of Rome comprehended the fairest part of the earth, and the most civilized portion of mankind. The frontiers of that extensive monarchy were guarded by ancient renown and disciplined valour. The gentle but powerful influence of laws and manners had gradually cemented the union of the provinces. Their peaceful inhabitants enjoyed and abused the advantages of wealth and luxury. The image of a free constitution was preserved with decent reverence.

JOHNSON.

Of genius, that power which constitutes a poet; that quality without which judgment is cold and knowledge is inert; that energy which collects, combines, amplifies, and animates; the superiority must, with some hesitation, be allowed to Dryden. It is not to be inferred that of this poetical vigour Pope had only a little, because Dryden had more; for every other writer since Milton must give place to Pope: and even of Dryden it must be said, that if he has brighter paragraphs, he has not better poems.

From the preceding instances we may form an idea of the power of the Saxon language; but by no means a just idea; for we must not conclude that the words which are not Saxon could not be supplied by Saxon words. On the contrary, Saxon terms might be substituted for almost all the words not marked as Saxon.

To impress this sufficiently on the mind of the reader, it will be necessary to shew how much of our ancient language we have laid aside, and have suffered to become obsolete; because all our writers, from Chaucer to our own times, have used words of foreign origin rather than our own.

In three pages of Alfred's Orosius I found 78 words which have become obsolete, out of 548, or about $\frac{1}{7}$. In three pages of his Boethius I found 143 obsolete, out of 666, or about $\frac{1}{5}$. In three pages of his Bede I found 230 obsolete, out of 969, or about $\frac{1}{4}$. The difference in the proportion between these and the Orosius proceeds from the latter containing many historical names. Perhaps we shall be near the truth if we say, as a general principle, that one-fifth of the Anglo-Saxon language has ceased to be used in modern English. This loss

must be of course taken into account when we estimate the copiousness of our ancient language, by considering how much of it our English authors exhibit.

I cannot agree with Hickes in classing the works of Alfred under that division of the Saxon language which he calls Danish Saxon. The Danes had no footing in England till after the period of Alfred's manhood, and when they obtained a settlement, it was in East Anglia and Northumbria. We cannot therefore suppose that Alfred borrowed any part of his language from the Danes. None of their language could have become naturalized in Wessex before he wrote, nor have been adopted by him without either reason or necessity. We may therefore refer to the Anglo-Saxon laws before the reign of Athelstan, and to the works of Alfred, as containing the Anglo-Saxon language in its genuine and uncorrupted state.

I should have been desirous to have stated some opinions on the affinities of the Anglo-Saxon tongue, but that I found it a subject which could not be accurately handled without a deep consideration of almost every other language; and which, therefore, could not with any propriety have been made a part of this history.

THE END.

I N D E X.

A

ABBO, his account of St. Edmund, 235.

Adrian sent to England, ii. 361.

Adultery, its punishment among the Pagan Saxons, ii. 10.—Ditto among the Anglo-Saxons, *ib.* 253.

Æscuin reigns, 150.

Æthelheard in Wessex, 162.

Alaric, his rise, 66.—And Progress, 67.—Takes Rome, 75.

Alcimus Auitus, his narrative poem, ii. 318.

Alcuin's latin poetry, ii. 354.—His life, *ib.* 374.

Aldhelm's native poetry, ii. 287.—His latin poetry, *ib.* 332.—His other literature, *ib.* 365.

Alfred of Northumbria, 153.—Encourages literature, 154.—His successors, 157.

ALFRED The Great, his birth, 184.—Sent to Rome, 185.—His youth and education, 191.—His marriage, 227.—His battle against the Danes at *Æscesdun*, 240.—Accedes, 243.—His battles and peace with the Northmen, 244.—Attacked again, 246.—His naval successes, *ib.*—Becomes a fugitive, 248.—Misconduct imputed to him, 251.—Deserted by his subjects, 255.—His asylum at a Swineherd's, 256.—His munificence to the peasant, 257.—His retreat described, 259.—Joined by others, *ib.*—Their excursive warfare, 260.—His charity, 261.—He visits the enemies camp in disguise, 262.—His battle at *Eddinton*, 263.—Permits the Danes to colonize East Anglia, 264.—Builds ships, 267.—His battles with *Hastings*, 271.—His death, 284.

VOL. II.

ALFRED, his first studies, 285.—He seeks for literary friends, 291.—His kindness to *Asser*, 292.—He learns the latin language, 294.—His preface to one of his translations, 295.—His taste in the arts, 299.—In architecture, *ib.*

—his care in the education of his children, 301.—His last address to his son, 303.—His arrangement of his officers, 304.—His employment of his income, 305.—Of his time, *ib.*—His piety, 307.

—his public conduct, 311.—His embassy to India, 313.—His police, 326.—His disease, 330.—The first monarch of the Anglo-Saxons, 351.

—his poetry, ii. 321.—His translations, *ib.* 381-401.—His *Notitia* of Germany, *ib.* 382.—His account of *Ohthere's* voyage, *ib.* 384.—His *Psalter*, *ib.* 402.—His *Æsop*, *ib.*

Algar, his patriotic struggle against the Danes, 229.

Aneurin, quoted, 11.—A chieftain, 117.—His poem on the battle of *Cattraeth*, 122.

Angles, their origin, 58.

Anglo-Saxons, their octarchy established, 128.

Anlaf, invades *Athelstan*, 344.—Visits his camp, 345.

Apollonius Petrus, his poem, ii. 319.

Arator, his poem, ii. 319.

Architecture of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 411.

ARTHUR, his probable history, 101.—His birth, *ib.*—His actions, 102.—How mentioned in the Welsh Bards, 104.—His poetry, 105.—His death, *ib.*—His family, 107.—His remains discovered, *ib.*—Origin of the romances concerning him, 108.

I N D E X.

ARTS of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 406.

Assault, its punishment, ii. 248.

ATHELSTAN, accedes, 340.—Attacked by Anlaf, 344.—His battle at Brunanburh, 347.—The first monarch of England, 350.—Aids the French king, 355.

—his connections with Bretagne, 352.—With France, *ib.*—With the Emperor of Germany, 355.—With Norway, 358.

—his books, 363.—He kills his brother, 364.

Augustin introduces Christianity into England, ii. 435.

B

Bagaude, 82.

Baldwin, surnamed the Arm of Iron, 189.

Ballads, or songs, ii. 287.

Bards of Britain, 23, 110.

Bede, his life of St. Cuthbert, ii. 319.—His latin poetry, *ib.* 347.—His other literature, *ib.* 368.—His works, *ib.* 369.—His death, *ib.* 370.—His chronology disputed, 63.

Benedict of Weremouth, ii. 362.

Benedictine order, 373.

Beornwulf, accedes in Mercia, 179.—Wars with Egbert, 180.

Beowulf, a narrative poem, ii. 294-303.

Berserkir described, 210.

Boniface, his latin poetry, ii. 350.—His life, *ib.* 372.

Borh, or sureties, ii. 258.

Boundaries of the Anglo-Saxon lands, ii. 184.

Bretagne, emigrations to, 109.

Brihtric accedes, 174.

BRITAIN, its names in the Welsh Triads, 5. Known to the Greeks, 16.—Manners of its first inhabitants, 18.—Their religion, 20.—Invaded by the Romans, 23.—Its history from the death of Maximus, 63. Attacked by the Barbarians, 76.—Its history from the departure of the Romans, 79.—Its civitates, 83.—Its civil discord, 85.—Many kings in it, 86.

Brunanburh, battle of, 347.

Busen, a Saxon island, 40.

C.

Cadwallon, his successes, 143.—His death, 144.

Cadwaladyr goes to Bretagne, 151.

Cadmon's paraphrase, ii. 309.

Cambridge, its antiquity disputed, 323.

CANUTE the Great, becomes king of Denmark, 421.—His conflicts in England with Ethelred, *ib.*—With Edmund, 423 to 430.—Made king of England, 431.—Punishes Edric, 433.—His reign, 431-443.

Carausius, his usurpation, 53.—He teaches the Saxons the naval art, 54.

Carthaginians, acquainted with Britain, 15.

Cassiterides, the British islands, 11-14.

Ceadwalla, 154.—His death, 155.

Cealwin's conquests, 131.—His death, 132.

Cena, his verses, ii. 352.

Cenwalch reigns in Wessex, 148.

Cerdic, invades Britain, 98.—His battles at Llongborth, 99.—At the Llawen, 100.—At Bath, 101.

Character of the most ancient Saxons, ii. 2.

Chivalry of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 139-148.

CHRISTIANITY introduced into England, 133.—Into China, 140.—In India, 316.—Its progress in England, and effects, ii. 435-442.

Cimmerians. See *Kimmerians*.

Cimbri, same as the *Kimmerians*, 4.—Their manners, 7.

Clubs of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 103.

Cnihts of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 144.

Commerce of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 113.

Conveyances, Anglo-Saxon, ii. 182.

Cookery of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 51.

Constantine, chosen emperor in Britain, 74. Leaves Britain, *ib.*—Destroyed, 76.

Croyland Abbey destroyed by the Northmen, 233.

Cuthred, in Wessex, 163.—Attacks the Welsh, 164.

Cynegils conquers the Britons, 136.

Cynewulf assassinated, 173.

D.

Danes. See *Northmen*.

INDEX.

Danes, first land in England, 174.—Invade Egbert, 182.—Invade Ethelbert, 190.—invade Ethelred, 410.—Their massacre, 415.—Bought off, 410. 412. 415. 418, 419.
Denmark, its state in the eighth century, 201.
Ditmarsia described, 44.
Diversions of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 73.
Dress of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 57.
Drinks of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 51.
Druids described, 21-23.
DUNSTAN, his birth, 377.—His studies, 379. Becomes a courtier, *ib.*—Disgraced, 380. Urged to become a monk, 382.—Change of his character, 383.—His affectation of peculiar piety, 384.—Made abbot of Glastonbury, 386.—Drags Edwin back to the feast, 389.—Banished, *ib.*—Made archbishop, 396.—His political arts, 397.

E.

Eadburga, her vices, 174.—Escapes to France, *ib.*—Her miserable death, 175.
Ealdorman, his rank, ii. 232.
East Anglia occupied, 123.—Expedition to the continent, 137.
Eddius, his life, ii. 373.
Edgar, his reign, 394-403.
Edmund, king of East Anglia, attacked by Ingwar, 235.—His address to the Danish envoy, 237.—Killed, 238.
Edmund the Elder, his reign, 365-368.
Edmund Ironside, his reign, 423-430.
Edred, his reign, 369-371.
Education of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 39.
Edward the Elder, his reign, 333-339.
Edward the Martyr, his reign, 404-407.
Edward the Confessor, his reign, 449.—His person, 461.
Edwin, takes refuge in East Anglia, 138. King of Northumbria, 139.—Attacked by an assassin, 140.—Adopts christianity 140. and ii. 437.—His police, 141.—His conduct to Cadwallon, 142.
Edwin, accedes, 372.—Insulted by Dunstan at his coronation, 387.—Conspiracy against him, 390.—His death, 391.

Egbert, archbishop, his love of literature, ii. 362.
Egbert, king, his ancestors, 176.—Comes from the Court of Charlemagne to England, 177.—His victory over Mercia, 180. Invades Northumbria, 182.—His death, 183.
Egfrid, in Northumbria, invades Ireland, 152.—Perishes against the Picts, *ib.*
Elfric, account of, ii. 403.
Elgiva, her sufferings, 390.
Ella arrives in Sussex, 97.
Ella kills Ragnar Lodbrog, 222.
Eorl, account of, ii. 232.
Eostre, a Saxon goddess, ii. 15.
Ephorus, the historian, 9.
Essex, its kingdom established, 123.—Converted, 134.
Ethelbald, of Mercia, 162.—Wars with the Welsh, 163.—With Cuthred, *ib.*—Perishes, 165.
Ethelbald accedes in Wessex, 189.
Ethelbert, invades Cealwin, 131.—His death, 136.—His reception of christianity, ii. 433.
Ethelbert accedes in Wessex, 190.
Ethelfrith's successes, 133.—Destroys Bangor, 134.—Seizes Deira, 138.—Falls, 139.
Ethelred, succeeds in Wessex, 224.—His battle with the Northmen, 239.—Dies, 241.
Ethelred the Unready, accedes, 408.—Invaded by Svein, 412.—Again, 416.—His flight, 420.—His death, 422.
Ethelwulf, accedes, 183.—Donation of tithes, 186.—His present to the Pope, *ib.*—His marriage with Judith, and deposition, 187.
Ethilwald, his verses, ii. 352.
Europe, its first inhabitants, 2.

F

Fæhthe, or deadly feud, ii. 246.
Food of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 44.
Fortunatus, his life of St. Martin, ii. 319.
Fosete, a Saxon deity worshipped in Heligland, ii. 15.

I N D E X.

Franks, their rise, 49.—True origin, 50.—
Their use to the Saxons, 51.—Their
voyage from the Euxine, 52.
Freemen, Anglo-Saxon, ii. 94.
Frisians, in England, 124.
Funerals of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 154-157.
Furniture of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 66.
Fyrde, a military service, ii. 176.

G.

Gaul desolated by the Germans, 73.
Geol, or *Jule*, account of, ii. 19.
Gerefas, their rank, ii. 234.
Germanicus, his conquest in Germany, 47.
Gildas, his history impeached, 63.—Com-
pared with the imperial writers, 68.
Gilds, or clubs, ii. 103.
Gleemen of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 76.
Godwin, earl, an herdsman's son, 428.—His
rise, 428-430.—His power under Ed-
ward, 449.—His death, 455.
Gothic language, 36.
Government of the more ancient Saxons,
ii. 7.—Of the Anglo-Saxons, *ib.* 199.
Greek, cultivated by the Anglo-Saxons, ii.
361.—How pronounced by them, *ib.*
Gregory the Great, his life, ii. 432.
Gwrtheyrn, in Britain, 89.—His transac-
tions with Hengist, 92.

H.

Haralld, of Norway, invades Harold, 478.—
Perishes, 482.
Hardicanute, his reign, 447, 448.
Harold the first, his reign, 444-447.
HAROLD the second, his competition with
William, 464.—His coronation, 471.—
His answer to William, 476.—Defeats
the king of Norway, 482.—Goes to fight
William, 488.—Falls, 496.
Hastings, his actions, 269.—Invades Italy
and France, 270.—Attacks Alfred, 271.
Hastings, battle of, 490-497.
Heilig Island described, 40.
HENGIST, his arrival, 90.—His conflicts
with the Britons, 92.—Driven from Bri-
tain, 93.—Returns, 94.

Heretoch, his rank, ii. 234.
Hereward, his life, ii. 139.
Hertha, a goddess of the Angles, ii. 17.
Holsatia described, 45.
Homicide, its punishment, ii. 239.
Houses of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 65.
Hu Cadarn, the leader of the Cymry into
Britain, 5.
Human sacrifices among the Saxons, ii. 18.
Hunting of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 77.
Husbandry of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 159 to
165.

I.

Icelandic writers, 215.
Ida arrives in Britain, 117.
Idols of the Saxons, ii. 15.
Ina's accession, 156.—His laws, *ib.*—De-
feats Geraint, 158.—Builds Glastonbury
Abbey, 159.—Advised by his Queen to
abdicate, *ib.*—Goes to Rome, 160.
Infancy, period of among the Anglo-Sax-
ons, ii. 35.
Inigils, the ancestor of Egbert, 159.
Ingwar, son of Ragnar Lodbrog, invades
England, 225.—Attacks Edmund, king of
East Anglia, 235.
Irminsula, account of, ii. 19.
Johannes Erigena, account of his works, ii.
376.
Journey of Bernard and others to Egypt,
318.
Jubilate in Saxon, ii. 446.
Judith, a narrative poem, ii. 304.
Judith, widow of Ethelbald, 189.
Jury, trial by, 328. ii. 270.
Jutes, their origin, 58.
Juvencus, his narrative poem, ii. 317.

K.

Kelts, sprang from the Kimmerians, 8.—
Their customs, *ib.*—Their situation in the
West of Europe, 9.—In the time of
Cæsar, 10.—They enter Britain, *ib.*
Keltic language, 36.
Kimmerians, more ancient than the Scy-
thians, 2.—Their entrance into Europe, *ib.*

I N D E X.

Their retreat into Asia, 3.—Same as the Cimbri, 4.—And Cymry in Britain, 5.—Their manners, 6.

Kentwin, 151.

Kentwulf, in Mercia, 178.—His death, *ib.* His son murdered, 179.

KING, his election and coronation, ii. 200 to 208.—His family and officers, *ib.* 209.—His dignity and prerogatives, *ib.* 211.

L

Lands of the Anglo-Saxons, to what liable, ii. 175.—Their denominations, *ib.* 196.

LANGUAGE, Anglo-Saxon, its history ii. 447.

LAWS, of the more ancient Saxons, ii. 10. Of the Anglo-Saxons, *ib.* 239.

Lawsuits of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 192.

Law tribunals, ii. 261.

Latin poetry of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 332.

Leobgitha, her verses, ii. 351.

LITERATURE, of the Pagan Saxons, ii. 25.—Of the Anglo-Saxons, *ib.* 359.

Llywarch Hen, 117.

M.

Macbeth, assassinates Duncan, 459.—Defeated by Siward, *ib.*

Magentius allies with the Saxons, 55.

Marriages of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 82.

Marriage settlement, Anglo-Saxon, ii. 84.

Maximus, his rise and fall, 64.

Merddhin, his *Afallenau* quoted, 7. 11.

Mercia, occupied, 124.—Admits christianity, 149.

Mercians destroy their queen, 157.

Military service among the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 176.

Mints of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 137.

Money of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 126.

Months of the Pagan Saxons, ii. 24.

Mollo's catastrophe, 155.

Morgen gift, account of, ii. 85.

Mund described, ii. 257.

Music of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 406.

N.

Names of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 36.

Names of places in the Anglo-Saxon times, ii. 188.

Narrative poetry, of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 294.—Of other countries in the Saxon period, *ib.* 317.

Nestorians, they diffuse christianity in India, 317.—Their influence in the Saracen Court, 321.

Nobility of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 90. and 232.—Arising from birth, *ib.* 90.—From property, 92.—From office, 93.

Normandy, dukes of, their origin, 461.

Northstrandt, a Saxon island, 39.

NORTHMEN, their first aggression on England, 217.—Invade England under the sons of Ragnar, 224.—Their progress, 227.—They destroy Croyland Abbey, 232, and Peterborough, 233.—Invade East Anglia, 235.—Invade Wessex, 239.—Conquer Mercia, 244—and Bernicia, 245.

Northumbria, its revolutions, 165.

Norway, its political state in the eighth century, 198.

O.

Ode, an Anglo-Saxon, ii. 324.

Odo favours the Benedictine system, 376.

Offa, made king of Mercia, 165.—Traditions concerning him, 168.—His wars, 169.—Corresponds with Charlemagne, *ib.*—Wars with the Britons, 170.—His dyke, 171.—His murder of Ethelbert, *ib.* The calamities of his family, 172.

Olaf Tryggvason, his life, ii. 117.

Ordeals, account of, ii. 266.

Oswald, defeats Cadwallon, 144.—His charity, 145.—Slain by Penda, 146.

Oswyn killed, 147.

Oswy, reigns, 147.—Defeats Penda, 148.—His death, 150.

Otho marries Athelstan's sister, 357.

Owen, son of Urien, 122.

Oxford, its antiquity disputed, 323.

P.

Painting of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 409.

I N D E X.

Paulinus, his life of St. Martin, ii. 318.
Penda's rise, 140.—His contest with Wessex, 141.—Slays Oswald, 146.—Attacks Bebbanburgh, *ib.*—Destroys the kings of East Anglia, *ib.*—His fate, 148.
Phenicians in Britain, 11.
Piracy of the North described, 207.—Its ferocious customs, 209.
Piracy, decline of, ii. 116-125.
POETRY, their native, ii. 277.—Its characteristics, 278.—Its origin, 282.
Polybius mentions the British islands, 17.
Prudentius, his narrative poem, ii. 317.
Punishments, legal, ii. 266.
Pytheas, his voyage to the North, 16.

R.

RAGNAR LODBROG, his expeditions, 217 to 221.—His death in Northumbria, 222.
Redwald, reigns in East Anglia, 138.—Protects Edwin and defeats Ethelfrith, 139.
RELIGION of the Pagan Saxons, ii. 12:—history of among the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 431-446.
—effects of among the Anglo-Saxons, 442.
ROMANS, invade Britain, 23.—Their wall built, 25.—Their progress to the Elbe, 46.—Repulsed to the Rhine, 49.—State of their provinces, 81.
Romances, origin of those concerning Arthur, 108.

S.

SAXONS, their origin, 27.—First mentioned by Ptolemy, 28.—Not noticed by Tacitus, 29.—A Scythian tribe, 34.—Probably the Saka-suna, *ib.*—Their islands, 39.—Their continental territory, 43.—They league with other states, 56.—Extend to the Rhine, 57.—Attack Britain, 60.—Are defeated by Theodosius, *ib.*—And on the continent by the Romans, 61.—Their settlement in Britain, 126.
Saxburga, her reign, 150.
Saxo Grammaticus, his character, 213.
Sea-kings described, 205.

Seasons in the Anglo-Saxon period, ii. 165.
Sedulius, his narrative poem, ii. 317.
Sidonius, his poems, ii. 318.
Sigebert accedes in Wessex, 164.
Slaves among the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 36.
Snorre, his history, 215.
Song, of Canute, ii. 288.—On the battle of Brunanburgh, *ib.* 289.—On Edgar's death, *ib.* 291.—Its origin among the Anglo-Saxons, *ib.* 293.
Stormaria described, 44.
Strandfrisii, 125.
Strathclyde kingdom, 118.
Superstitions, of the continental Saxons, ii. 22.—Of the Anglo-Saxons, *ib.* 149 to 153.
Svein, invades England, 412-416.—His death, 420.
Sussex, occupied, 97.—Transactions in, 149.
Sweden, its political state in the eighth century, 199.

T.

Taliesin, quoted, 7. 11.—His satirical poem, 115.—His historical poems, 120, 121.
Tapestry of Bayeux, 467.
Te Deum in Saxon, ii. 445.
Tenures of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 166-174.
Tewdric defeats Ceolwulph, 135.
Thegns, of their rank, ii. 235.
Theodore sent to England as archbishop of Canterbury, ii. 361.
Theodosius, defeats the Saxons, 60.—Dies, 65.
Torfaeus, the historian, 215.
Torques, a golden one described, 123.
Tostig invades Harold, 473.
Tournaments, in use in 934, ii. 147.
Trades of the Anglo-Saxons, ii. 107.
Triads, Welsh, account of, 5.—Extracts from, *ib.* and 11. 15.

V.

Versification of the Saxon poetry, ii. 326.
Victor, Claudius Marius, his poem, ii. 318.
Victorinus, his narrative poem, ii. 317.

I N D E X.

U.

Ubbo, son of Ragnar, invades England, 225.—His attack in Devonshire, 258. And death, 259.

Urien of Reged, 119.—Contends with *Ida*, *ib.*—Killed, 121.—His son *Owen*, 122.

W.

Walls of Britain, 25.

Week, days of, their Saxon names, ii. 13.

Welsh traditions, 14.

Were, account of, ii. 256.

West Saxons, their conquests, 131.

Wiglaf submits to *Egbert*, 181.

William, accedes in Normandy, 474.—His message to *Harold*, 475.—Prepares to invade England, 476.—Sails, 485.—Lands at *Pevensey*, 486.

Witchcraft believed by the Romans, ii. 149.

WITENA GEMOT, account of, ii. 220-231.

Woden, 202. ii. 14.

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